

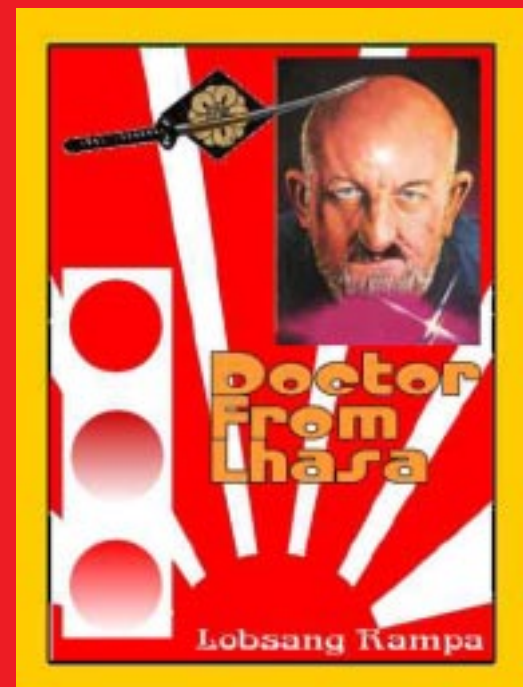
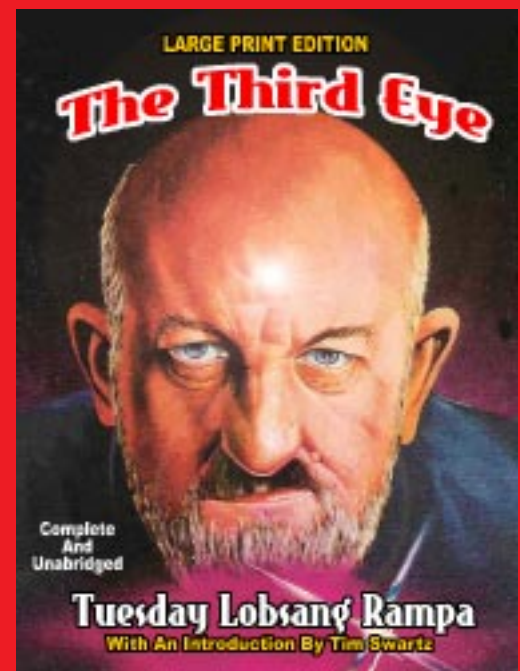
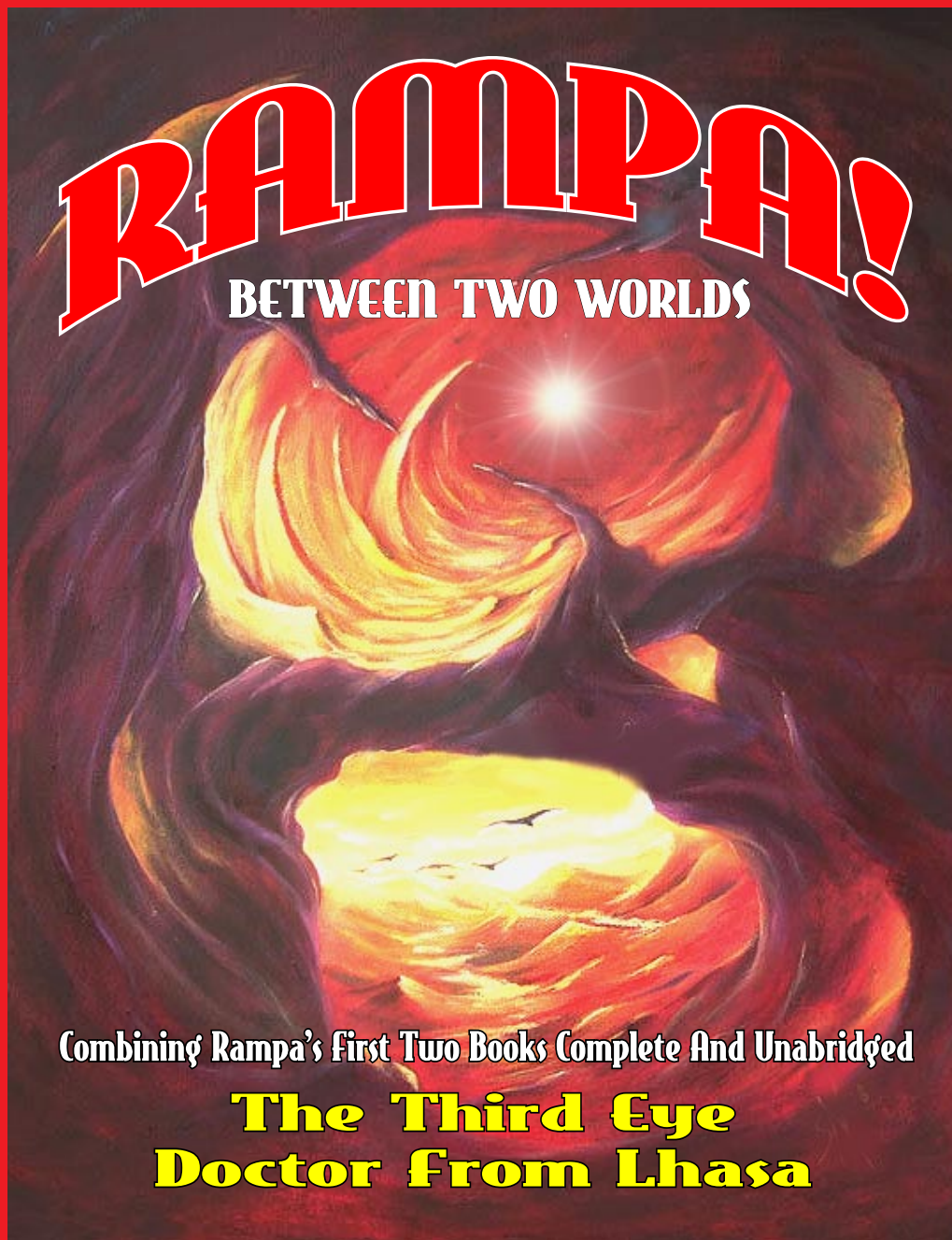


# **RAMPA!**

**BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**

**Combining Rampa's First Two Books Complete And Unabridged**

**The Third Eye  
Doctor From Lhasa**



## **RAMPA: BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**

At age 7 the Day of Prophecy arrived and the court astrologers pronounced their findings. It was proclaimed that T. Lobsang Rampa was to enter the lamasery to be trained as a clairvoyant and as a healer. Many predictions were made about his life, including that his work would be heralded worldwide.

The story continues with Rampa living in Chungking, China where he furthered his medical studies, learned to fly an airplane, and was captured and tortured by the Japanese during the Second World War.

Discusses karma, the other side of death, the silver chord, crystal power and astral projection, and exercises in breathing to improve ones wellbeing.



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*The complete and corrected text of Rampa's first two books:*

**The Third Eye  
and  
Doctor From Lhasa  
With an Introduction by Tim Swartz**

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## **EXAMINING THE STRANGE WORLD OF DR. T. LOBSANG RAMPA**

**by Tim Swartz**

It was a time when people were questioning their beliefs. Christianity and organized religion seemed stagnant and out of touch with a new generation who were seeking spiritual truths rather than undefined platitudes. People were seeking answers, but no one knew what the question was.

The time was ripe for a new beginning, and from the other side of the world a fresh breeze was blowing that would herald in a new age of understanding for teachings that were thousands of years old, but offered a new hope for those who were looking for ultimate truth.

In 1956 *The Third Eye* hit the stands with an amazing story that was allegedly the autobiography of a young Tibetan noble, Tenzin Lobsang Rampa, who, at the age of seven was sent to the Chakpori medical lamasery. *The Third Eye* details Rampa's early life at Chakpori where he was taught the secrets of Tibetan religion and the mystical arts. Rampa's own psychic abilities were helped to develop when he underwent an operation of the third eye, in which a hole was drilled in his forehead. This dangerous procedure opened a closed up part of the brain to the energies of the universe, releasing its potential and enabling it to grow beyond the boundaries of physical reality.

*The Third Eye* was an almost instant success. In the first year it sold over 60,000 copies and was translated into German, French and Norwegian. Even though skeptics universally panned the book, the public was eager to read about the exotic secrets of Tibet and the ancient ways of Eastern philosophy and religion.

In the 1950s Tibet was in the headlines due to the Chinese invasion of Eastern Tibet in 1949, and their total annexation of the country in 1951. Before that time little was known about the Himalayan country, its people and their beliefs. But as people fled before the Chinese occupation, they brought with them their rich customs which fanned the flames of interest in the West about anything Tibetan.

### **A WORLD IN TURMOIL**

The release of *The Third Eye* could not have come at a more perfect time. World War Two was still fresh in the minds of Europeans who had borne the brunt of the worst that

humankind could perpetuate upon itself. The Church offered little solace to those who survived and were left to wonder how a God who was supposed to be watching out for the world could allow such horrible things to happen. It seemed as if everything that people had been brought up to believe in, to trust, had let them down. Governments, leaders, the Church, had done nothing to stop the horrors of war, and in fact appeared to embrace the evil with no regard to those who would suffer the most.

People were disillusioned with authority. The Church preached “have faith,” but could really offer no other answers to why the world was as it was. In fact, the Church blamed the victims on why bad things happen. “All men are born with original sin” said the Ministers. “It does not matter how good you are or how many good and unselfish deeds you do; you are born a sinner and will die a sinner.” This is hardly inspirational words to those who are seeking real answers.

The Third Eye, however, revealed a whole new world to those seekers. It offered a spiritual and philosophical system that resonated in a way that Christianity and Western ideals did not. Even more appealing, it offered an easy access point for those Western minds dulled by years of materialism and instant gratification that might not have been able to grasp the intricacies of Eastern mysticism.

The Third Eye allowed a whole new generation to learn that there is more to this world, this universe, than had been taught to them by modern science and traditional Christianity. It started a new movement of understanding that is still with us today. All thanks to one controversial writer.

## **CONTROVERSY**

It was not long before controversy embroiled the Rampa movement. Perhaps due to The Third Eyes popularity, there were those who felt it was their duty to bring down the growing movement before it threatened the Church and possibly political systems. A group of scholars living in Britain were certain that Rampa was a fraud, so they hired a detective by the name of Clifford Burgess to determine the validity of Rampa’s tale. It is now known that this effort was financed by a group representing not only the Church of England, but also high level British Government officials who were worried that interest in Eastern religions would undermine democracy in the Western world.

Clifford Burgess discovered that T. Lobsang Rampa had never been to Tibet, nor had he ever had any operation done to his forehead. Instead Rampa was actually Cyril Henry Hoskins, born in Devon, England, and son of a plumber named Joseph Henry Hopkins.

When the press confronted Hoskins with this revelation, Hoskins freely admitted that he had never “physically” been to Tibet. In reply to his critics, Rampa stated: “The Third Eye is absolutely true and all that I write in that book is fact. I, a Tibetan lama, now occupy what was originally the body of a Western man, and I occupy it to the permanent and total exclusion of the former occupant. He gave his willing consent, being glad to escape from life on this earth in view of my urgent need. One should not place too much credence in ‘experts’ or ‘Tibetan Scholars’ when it is seen how one ‘expert’ contradicts the other, when they cannot agree on what is right and what is wrong, and after all how



many of those ‘Tibetan scholars’ have entered a lamasery at the age of seven, and worked all the way through the life as a Tibetan, and then taken over the body of a Westerner? I HAVE.”

The public, however, continued to believe in Rampa and to buy his books. Rampa’s subsequent books give more details of experiences which he encountered after the period covered by *The Third Eye*. He included stories about Chinese atrocities against Tibetan monks and lamas, ancient civilizations, encounters with the Yeti, gilded mummies of an extraterrestrial super-race, and hidden cities deep within lost caverns. What makes Rampa’s books especially popular is his practical esoteric teachings from which the ordinary person can learn and develop spiritually.

In his later books, Rampa even wrote about UFOs and life on other planets. Two controversial books are *My Visit to Venus*, originally published by Gray Barker, and *My Visit to Agharta*, published by Inner Light Publications. Both of these books have been criticized by Rampa’s followers who are unaware of his interest in UFOs and extraterrestrials. However, those familiar with his later writings are certain that both books were written by him, but were possibly withheld from publication due to their controversial nature. Only by reading the books can the reader make the judgment for themselves.

Truth is, very few of the Rampa books were ever made available in the U.S.; with several exceptions the majority of them were printed and distributed solely in the U.K. where Rampa made his home most of his life. Now deceased for well over two decades his works have been largely ignored by an entirely new generation of metaphysically and occult minded readers. It was only through the foresight of dedicated publishers that a decision was made to bring a few of Rampa’s most controversial works to this “side of the pond” so that open minded readers might tackle the ideas that the lama put forth.

These initial works included, *The Third Eye*, *The Hermit*, *Doctor From Lhasa*, *Feeding The Flame*, *The Rampa Story*, *Living With the Lama* and *Cave of The Ancients*.

In keeping with Rampa’s traditional values and to quell a continued thirst for more of his books, it is time to shed more light onto a darkening world with the release of ***TWILIGHT; HIDDEN CHAMBERS BENEATH THE EARTH*** in which Rampa reveals the reality of the Inner Earth, a subject few dared to tackle in his lifetime.

Always a provocative topic, Rampa discusses how a belief in the Hollow Earth is part of the Buddhist philosophy beginning with the idea that there is actually a King of the underworld. Publisher William Kern has promised reissue other of Rampa’s earlier works if there is sufficient demand for those books.

“Hopefully,” says the publisher, “the two-in-one books, ***Between Two Worlds, World of Illusions and Secrets Of The Ages*** will start a new trend and there will be a clarion call to bring Rampa’s works back into print. Perhaps this will start a new movement of spiritual seekers eager to move away from the world where terrorism, first strike initiatives, end time fanatics, global pollution and rampant materialism has replaced the inner peace and harmony that Rampa saw as our birthright.”

We can say with certainty that Rampa’s works are ageless and his wisdom is needed

now more than ever. He saw a New Age emerging, and perhaps we can still promote his vision of a Brave New World.

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We will continue to proof and correct earlier editions of Rampa's books and hope to produce at least 19 of them by the end of 2012.

# **RAMPA: BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**

## **BOOK ONE:**

### **THE THIRD EYE**

#### **CHAPTER ONE**

##### **EARLY DAYS AT HOME**

“Oe. Oe. Four years old and can’t stay on a horse! You’ll never make a man! What will your noble father say?” With this, Old Tzu gave the pony—and luckless rider—a hearty thwack across the hindquarters, and spat in the dust. The golden roofs and domes of the Potala gleamed in the brilliant sunshine. Closer, the blue waters of the Serpent Temple lake rippled to mark the passing of the waterfowl. From farther along the stony track came the shouts and cries of men urging on the slow-moving yaks just setting out from Lhasa. From near by came the chest-shaking “bmmn, bmmn, bmmn” of the deep bass trumpets as monk musicians practiced in the fields away from the crowds.

But I had no time for such everyday, commonplace things. Mine was the serious task of staying on my very reluctant pony. Nakkim had other things in mind. He wanted to be free of his rider, free to graze, and roll and kick his feet in the air.

Old Tzu was a grim and forbidding taskmaster. All his life he had been stern and hard, and now as guardian and riding instructor to a small boy of four, his patience often gave way under the strain. One of the men of Kham, he, with others, had been picked for his size and strength. Nearly seven feet tall he was, and broad with it. Heavily padded shoulders increased his apparent breadth. In eastern Tibet there is a district where the men are unusually tall and strong. Many were over seven feet tall, and these men were picked to act as police monks in all the lamaseries. They padded their shoulders to increase their apparent size, blackened their faces to look more fierce, and carried long staves which they were prompt to use on any luckless malefactor.

Tzu had been a police monk, but now he was dry-nurse to a princeling! He was too badly crippled to do much walking, and so all his journeys were made on horseback. In 1904 the British, under Colonel Younghusband, invaded Tibet and caused much damage. Apparently they thought the easiest method of ensuring our friendship was to shell

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our buildings and kill our people. Tzu had been one of the defenders, and in the action he had part of his left hip blown away.

My father was one of the leading men in the Tibetan Government. His family, and that of mother, came within the upper ten families, and so between them my parents had considerable influence in the affairs of the country. Later I will give more details of our form of government. Father was a large man, bulky, and nearly six feet tall. His strength was something to boast about. In his youth he could lift a pony off the ground, and he was one of the few who could wrestle with the men of Kham and come off best. Most Tibetans have black hair and dark brown eyes. Father was one of the exceptions, his hair was chestnut brown, and his eyes were grey. Often he would give way to sudden bursts of anger for no reason that we could see.

We did not see a great deal of father. Tibet had been having troublesome times. The British had invaded us in 1904, and the Dalai Lama had fled to Mongolia, leaving my father and others of the Cabinet to rule in his absence. In 1909 the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa after having been to Peking. In 1910 the Chinese, encouraged by the success of the British invasion, stormed Lhasa. The Dalai Lama again retreated, this time to India. The Chinese were driven from Lhasa in 1911 during the time of the Chinese Revolution, but not before they had committed fearful crimes against our people.

In 1912 the Dalai Lama again returned to Lhasa. During the whole time he was absent, in those most difficult days, father and the others of the Cabinet, had the full responsibility of ruling Tibet. Mother used to say that father's temper was never the same after. Certainly he had no time for us children, and we at no time had fatherly affection from him. I, in particular, seemed to arouse his ire, and I was left to the scant mercies of Tzu "to make or break", as father said. My poor performance on a pony was taken as a personal insult by Tzu. In Tibet small boys of the upper class are taught to ride almost before they can walk. Skill on a horse is essential in a country where there is no wheeled traffic, where all journeys have to be done on foot or on horseback. Tibetan nobles practice horsemanship hour after hour, day after day. They can stand on the narrow wooden saddle of a galloping horse, and shoot first with a rifle at a moving target, then change to bow and arrow. Sometimes skilled riders will gallop across the plains in formation, and change horses by jumping from saddle to saddle.

I, at four years of age, found it difficult to stay in one saddle!

My pony, Nakkim, was shaggy, and had a long tail. His narrow head was intelligent. He knew an astonishing number of ways in which to unseat an unsure rider. A favourite trick of his was to have a short run forward, then stop dead and lower his head. As I slid helplessly forward over his neck and on to his head he would raise it with a jerk so that I turned a complete somersault before hitting the ground. Then he would stand and look at me with smug complacency.

Tibetans never ride at a trot; the ponies are small and riders look ridiculous on a trotting pony. Most times a gentle amble is fast enough, with the gallop kept for exercise. Tibet was a theocratic country. We had no desire for the "progress" of the outside world. We wanted only to be able to meditate and to overcome the limitations of the flesh. Our

## **RAMPA: BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**

Wise Men had long realized that the West had coveted the riches of Tibet, and knew that when the foreigners came in, peace went out. Now the arrival of the Communists in Tibet has proved that to be correct.

My home was in Lhasa, in the fashionable district of Lingkhör, at the side of the ring road which goes all round Lhasa, and in the Shadow of the Peak. There are three circles of roads, and the outer road, Lingkhör, is much used by pilgrims. Like all houses in Lhasa, at the time I was born ours was two stories high at the side facing the road. No one must look down on the Dalai Lama, so the limit is two stories. As the height ban really applies only to one procession a year, many houses have an easily dismantled wooden structure on their flat roofs for eleven months or so.

Our house was of stone and had been built for many years. It was in the form of a hollow square, with a large internal courtyard. Our animals used to live on the ground floor, and we lived upstairs. We were fortunate in having a flight of stone steps leading from the ground; most Tibetan houses have a ladder or, in the peasants' cottages, a notched pole which one uses at dire risk to one's shins. These notched poles became very slippery indeed with use; hands covered with yak butter transferred it to the pole and the peasant who forgot, made a rapid descent to the floor below.

In 1910, during the Chinese invasion, our house had been partly wrecked and the inner wall of the building was demolished. Father had it rebuilt four stories high. It did not overlook the Ring, and we could not look over the head of the Dalai Lama when in procession, so there were no complaints. The gate which gave entrance to our central courtyard was heavy and black with age. The Chinese invaders has not been able to force its solid wooden beams, so they had broken down a wall instead. Just above this entrance was the office of the steward. He could see all who entered or left. He engaged—and dismissed—staff and saw that the household was run efficiently. Here, at his window, as the sunset trumpets blared from the monasteries, came the beggars of Lhasa to receive a meal to sustain them through the darkness of the night. All the leading nobles made provision for the poor of their district. Often chained convicts would come, for there are few prisons in Tibet, and the convicted wandered the streets and begged for their food.

In Tibet convicts are not scorned or looked upon as pariahs. We realized that most of us would be convicts—if we were found out—so those who were unfortunate were treated reasonably. Two monks lived in rooms to the right of the steward; these were the household priests who prayed daily for divine approval of our activities. The lesser nobles had one priest, but our position demanded two. Before any event of note, these priests were consulted and asked to offer prayers for the favour of the gods. Every three years the priests returned to the lamaseries and were replaced by others.

In each wing of our house there was a chapel. Always the butter-lamps were kept burning before the carved wooden altar. The seven bowls of holy water were cleaned and replenished several times a day. They had to be clean, as the gods might want to come and drink from them. The priests were well fed, eating the same food as the family, so that they could pray better and tell the gods that our food was good.



## **RAMPA: BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**

To the left of the steward lived the legal expert, whose job it was to see that the household was conducted in a proper and legal manner. Tibetans are very law-abiding, and father had to be an outstanding example in observing the law.

We children, brother Paljor, sister Yasodhara, and I, lived in the new block, at the side of the square remote from the road. To our left we had a chapel, to the right was the schoolroom which the children of the servants also attended. Our lessons were long and varied. Paljor did not inhabit the body long. He was weakly and unfit for the hard life to which we both were subjected. Before he was seven he left us and returned to the Land of Many Temples.

Yaso was six when Paljor passed over, and I was four. I still remember when they came for him as he lay, an empty husk, and how the Men of the Death carried him away to be broken up and fed to the scavenger birds according to custom. Now Heir to the Family, my training was intensified. I was four years of age and a very indifferent horseman. Father was indeed a strict man and as a Prince of the Church he saw to it that his son had stern discipline, and was an example of how others should be brought up.

In my country, the higher the rank of a boy, the more severe his training. Some of the nobles were beginning to think that boys should have an easier time, but not father. His attitude was: a poor man had no hope of comfort later, so give him kindness and consideration while he was young. The higher-class boy had all riches and comforts to expect in later years, so be quite brutal with him during boyhood and youth, so that he should experience hardship and show consideration for others. This also was the official attitude of the country. Under this system weaklings did not survive, but those who did could survive almost anything.

Tzu occupied a room on the ground floor and very near the main gate. For years he had, as a police monk, been able to see all manner of people and now he could not bear to be in seclusion, away from it all. He lived near the stables in which father kept his twenty horses and all the ponies and work animals. The grooms hated the sight of Tzu, because he was officious and interfered with their work. When father went riding he had to have six armed men escort him. These men wore uniforms, and Tzu always bustled about them, making sure that everything about their equipment was in order.

For some reason these six men used to back their horses against a wall, then, as soon as my father appeared on his horse, they would charge forward to meet him. I found that if I leaned out of a storeroom window, I could touch one of the riders as he sat on his horse. One day, being idle, I cautiously passed a rope through his stout leather belt as he was fiddling with his equipment. The two ends I looped and passed over a hook inside the window. In the bustle and talk I was not noticed. My father appeared, and the riders surged forward. Five of them. The sixth was pulled backwards off his horse, yelling that demons were gripping him. His belt broke, and in the confusion I was able to pull away the rope and steal away undetected. It gave me much pleasure, later, to say "So you too, Ne-tuk, can't stay on a horse!"

Our days were quite hard, we were awake for eighteen hours out of the twenty-four. Tibetans believe that it is not wise to sleep at all when it is light, or the demons of the day

## **RAMPA: BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**

may come and seize one. Even very small babies are kept awake so that they shall not become demon-infested. Those who are ill also have to be kept awake, and a monk is called in for this. No one is spared from it, even people who are dying have to be kept conscious for as long as possible, so that they shall know the right road to take through the border lands to the next world.

At school we had to study languages, Tibetan and Chinese. Tibetan is two distinct languages, the ordinary and the honorific. We used the ordinary when speaking to servants and those of lesser rank, and the honorific to those of equal or superior rank. The horse of a higher-rank person had to be addressed in honorific style! Our autocratic cat, stalking across the courtyard on some mysterious business, would be addressed by a servant: "Would honourable Puss Puss deign to come and drink this unworthy milk?" No matter how "honourable Puss Puss" was addressed, she would never come until she was ready.

Our schoolroom was quite large; at one time it had been used as a refectory for visiting monks, but since the new buildings were finished, that particular room had been made into a school for the estate. Altogether there were about sixty children attending. We sat cross-legged on the floor, at a table, or long bench, which was about eighteen inches high. We sat with our backs to the teacher, so that we did not know when he was looking at us. It made us work hard all the time. Paper in Tibet is hand made and expensive, far too expensive to waste on children. We used slates, large thin slabs about twelve inches by fourteen inches. Our "pencils" were a form of hard chalk which could be picked up in the Tsu La Hills, some twelve thousand feet higher than Lhasa, which was already twelve thousand feet above sea-level. I used to try to get the chalks with a reddish tint, but sister Yaso was very very fond of a soft purple. We could obtain quite a number of colours: reds, yellows, blues, and greens. Some of the colours, I believe, were due to the presence of metallic ores in the soft chalk base. Whatever the cause we were glad to have them.

Arithmetic really bothered me. If seven hundred and eighty-three monks each drank fifty-two cups of tsampa per day, and each cup held five-eighths of a pint, what size container would be needed for a week's supply? Sister Yaso could do these things and think nothing of it. I, well, I was not so bright. I came into my own when we did carving. That was a subject which I liked and could do reasonably well. All printing in Tibet is done from carved wooden plates, and so carving was considered to be quite an asset. We children could not have wood to waste. The wood was expensive as it had to be brought all the way from India. Tibetan wood was too tough and had the wrong kind of grain. We used a soft kind of soapstone material, which could be cut easily with a sharp knife. Sometimes we used stale yak cheese!

One thing that was never forgotten was a recitation of the Laws. These we had to say as soon as we entered the schoolroom, and again, just before we were allowed to leave. These Laws were :

Return good for good.

Do not fight with gentle people.

## **RAMPA: BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**

Read the Scriptures and understand them.

Help your neighbours.

The Law is hard on the rich to teach them understanding and equity.

The Law is gentle with the poor to show them compassion.

Pay your debts promptly.

So that there was no possibility of forgetting, these Laws were carved on banners and fixed to the four walls of our schoolroom. Life was not all study and gloom though; we played as hard as we studied. All our games were designed to toughen us and enable us to survive in hard Tibet with its extremes of temperature. At noon, in summer, the temperature may be as high as eighty-five degrees Fahrenheit, but that same summer's night it may drop to forty degrees below freezing. In winter it was often very much colder than this.

Archery was good fun and it did develop muscles. We used bows made of yew, imported from India, and sometimes we made crossbows from Tibetan wood. As Buddhists we never shot at living targets. Hidden servants would pull a long string and cause a target to bob up and down—we never knew which to expect. Most of the others could hit the target when standing on the saddle of a galloping pony. I could never stay on that long! Long jumps were a different matter. Then there was no horse to bother about. We ran as fast as we could, carrying a fifteen-foot pole, then when our speed was sufficient, jumped with the aid of the pole. I use to say that the others stuck on a horse so long that they had no strength in their legs, but I, who had to use my legs, really could vault. It was quite a good system for crossing streams, and very satisfying to see those who were trying to follow me plunge in one after the other.

Stilt walking was another of my pastimes. We used to dress up and become giants, and often we would have fights on stilts—the one who fell off was the loser. Our stilts were homemade, we could not just slip round to the nearest shop and buy such things. We used all our powers of persuasion on the keeper of the Stores— usually the Steward— so that we could obtain suitable pieces of wood. The grain had to be just right, and there had to be freedom from knotholes. Then we had to obtain suitable wedge-shaped pieces of footrests. As wood was too scarce to waste, we had to wait our opportunity and ask at the most appropriate moment.

The girls and young women played a form of shuttlecock. A small piece of wood had holes made in one upper edge, and feathers were wedged in. The shuttlecock was kept in the air by using the feet. The girl would lift her skirt to a suitable height to permit a free kicking and from then on would use her feet only, to touch with the hand meant that she was disqualified. An active girl would keep the thing in the air for as long as ten minutes at a time before missing a kick.

The real interest in Tibet, or at least in the district of U, which is the home country of Lhasa, was kite flying. This could be called a national sport. We could only indulge in it at certain times, at certain seasons. Years before it had been discovered that if kites were

## **RAMPA: BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**

flown in the mountains, rain fell in torrents, and in those days it was thought that the Rain Gods were angry, so kite flying was permitted only in the autumn, which in Tibet is the dry season. At certain times of the year, men will not shout in the mountains, as the reverberation of their voices causes the supersaturated rain clouds from India to shed their load too quickly and cause rainfall in the wrong place. Now, on the first day of autumn, a long kite would be sent up from the roof of the Potala. Within minutes, kites of all shapes, sizes, and hues made their appearance over Lhasa, bobbing and twisting in the strong breeze.

I love kite flying and I saw to it that my kite was one of the first to soar upwards. We all made our own kites usually with a bamboo framework, and almost always covered with fine silk. We had no difficulty in obtaining this good quality material, it was a point of honour for the household that the kite should be of the finest class. Of box form, we frequently fitted them with a ferocious dragon head and with wings and tail.

We had battles in which we tried to bring down the kites of our rivals. We stuck shards of broken glass to the kite string, and covered part of the cord with glue powdered with broken glass in the hope of being able to cut the strings of others and so capture the falling kite.

Sometimes we used to steal out at night and send our kite aloft with little butter-lamps inside the head and body. Perhaps the eyes would glow red, and the body would show different colours against the dark night sky. We particularly liked it when the huge Yak caravans were expected from the Lhodzong district. In our childish innocence we thought that the ignorant natives from far distant places would not know about such "modern" inventions as our kites, so we used to set out to frighten some wits into them.

One device of ours was to put three different shells into the kite in a certain way, so that when the wind blew into them, they would produce a weird wailing sound. We likened it to fire-breathing dragons shrieking in the night, and we hoped that its effect on the traders would be salutary. We had many a delicious tingle along our spines as we thought of these men lying frightened in their bedrolls as our kites bobbed above.

Although I did not know it at this time, my play with kites was to stand me in very good stead in later life when I actually flew in them. Now it was but a game, although an exciting one. We had one game which could have been quite dangerous: we made large kites—big things about seven or eight feet square and with wings projecting from two sides. We used to lay these on level ground near a ravine where there was a particularly strong updraught of air. We would mount our ponies with one end of the cord looped round our waist, and then we would gallop off as fast as our ponies would move. Up into the air jumped the kite and soaring higher and higher until it met this particular updraught. There would be a jerk and the rider would be lifted straight off his pony, perhaps ten feet in the air and sink, swaying slowly to earth. Some poor wretches were almost torn in two if they forgot to take their feet from the stirrups, but I, never very good on a horse, could always fall off, and to be lifted was a pleasure. I found, being foolishly adventurous, that if I yanked at a cord at the moment of rising I would go higher, and further judicious yanks would enable me to prolong my flights by seconds.

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On one occasion I yanked most enthusiastically, the wind cooperated, and I was carried onto the flat roof of a peasant's house upon which was stored the winter fuel. Tibetan peasants live in houses with flat roofs with a small parapet, which retains the yak dung, which is dried and used as fuel. This particular house was of dried mud brick instead of the more usual stone, nor was there a chimney: an aperture in the roof served to discharge smoke from the fire below. My sudden arrival at the end of a rope disturbed the fuel and as I was dragged across the roof, I scooped most of it through the hole onto the unfortunate inhabitants below.

I was not popular. My appearance, also through that hole, was greeted with yelps of rage and, after having one dusting from the furious householder, I was dragged off to father for another dose of corrective medicine. That night I lay on my face! The next day I had the unsavoury job of going through the stables and collecting yak dung, which I had to take to the peasant's house and replace on the roof, which was quite hard work, as I was not yet six years of age. But everyone was satisfied except me; the other boys had a good laugh, the peasant now had twice as much fuel, and father had demonstrated that he was a strict and just man. And I? I spent the next night on my face as well, and I was not sore with horse riding!

It may be thought that all this was very hard treatment, but Tibet has no place for weaklings. Lhasa is twelve thousand feet above sea-level, and with extremes of temperature. Other districts are higher, and the conditions even more arduous, and weaklings could very easily imperil others. For this reason, and not because of cruel intent, training was strict.

At the higher altitudes people dip newborn babies in icy streams to test if they are strong enough to be allowed to live. Quite often I have seen little processions approaching such stream, perhaps seventeen thousand feet above the sea. At banks the procession will stop, and the grandmother will take baby. Around her will be grouped the family: father, mother, and close relatives. The baby will be undressed, and grandmother will stoop and immerse the little body in the water, so that only the head and mouth are exposed to the air. In the bitter cold the baby turns red, then blue, and its cries of protest stop. It looks dead but grandmother has much experience of such things, and the little one is lifted from the water, dried, and dressed. If the baby survives, then it is as the gods decree. If it dies, then it has been spared much suffering on earth. This really is the kindest way in such a frigid country. Far better that a few babies die than that they should be incurable invalids in a country where there is scant medical attention.

With the death of my brother it became necessary to have my studies intensified, because when I was seven years of age I should have to enter upon training for whatever career the astrologers suggested. In Tibet everything is decided by astrology, from the buying of a yak to the decision about one's career. Now the time was approaching, just before my seventh birthday, when mother would give a really big party to which nobles and others of high rank would be invited to hear the forecast of the astrologers. Mother was decidedly plump, she had a round face and black hair. Tibetan women wear a sort of wooden framework on their head and over this the hair is draped to make it as ornamental as possible. These frames were very elaborate affairs, they were frequently of



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crimson lacquer, studded with semiprecious stones and inlaid with jade and coral. With well-oiled hair the effect was very brilliant.

Tibetan women use very gay clothes, with many reds and greens and yellows. In most instances there would be an apron of one colour with a vivid horizontal stripe of a contrasting but harmonious colour. Then there was the earring at the left ear, its size depending on the rank of the wearer. Mother, being a member of one of the leading families, had an earring more than six inches long.

We believe that women should have absolutely equal rights with men, but in the running of the house mother went further than that and was the undisputed dictator, an autocrat who knew what she wanted and always got it.

In the stir and flurry of preparing the house and the grounds for the party she was indeed in her element. There was organizing to be done, commands to be given, and new schemes to outshine the neighbors to be thought out. She excelled at this, having travelled extensively with father to India, Peking, and Shanghai, she had a wealth of foreign thought at her disposal.

The date having been decided for the party, invitations were carefully written out by monk-scribes on the thick, handmade paper which was always used for communications of the highest importance. Each invitation was about twelve inches wide by about two feet long: each invitation bore father's family seal, and, as mother also was of the upper ten, her seal had to go on as well.

Father and mother had a joint seal, this bringing the total to three altogether; the invitations were most imposing documents. It frightened me immensely to think that all this fuss was solely about me. I did not know that I was really of secondary importance, and that the Social Event came first. If I had been told that the magnificence of the party would confer great prestige upon my parents; it would have conveyed absolutely nothing to me, so I went on being frightened.

We had engaged special messengers to deliver these invitations; each man was mounted on a thoroughbred horse. Each carried a cleft stick, in which was lodged an invitation. The stick was surmounted by a replica of the family coat of arms. The sticks were gaily decorated with printed prayers which waved in the wind. There was pandemonium in the courtyard as all the messengers got ready to leave at the same time. The attendants were hoarse with shouting, horses were neighing, and the huge black mastiffs were barking madly. There was a last-minute gulping of Tibetan beer before the mugs were put down with a clatter as the ponderous main gates rumbled open, and the troop of men with wild yells galloped out.

In Tibet messengers deliver a written message, but also give an oral version which may be quite different. In days of long ago bandits would waylay messengers and act upon the written message, perhaps attacking an ill-defended house or procession. It became the habit to write a misleading message which often lured bandits to where they could be captured. This old custom of written and oral messages was a survival of the past. Even now, sometimes the two messages would differ, but the oral version was al-

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ways accepted as correct.

Inside the house everything was bustle and turmoil. The walls were cleaned and recoloured, the floors were scraped and the wooden boards polished until they were really dangerous to walk upon. The carved wooden altars in the main rooms were polished and relacquered and many new butter lamps were put in use. Some of these lamps were gold and some were silver, but they were all polished so much that it was difficult to see which was which. All the time mother and the head steward were hurrying around, criticizing here, ordering there, and generally giving the servants a miserable time. We had more than fifty servants at the time and others were engaged for the forthcoming occasion. They were all kept busy, but they all worked with a will. Even the courtyard was scraped until the stones shone as if newly quarried.

The spaces between them were filled with coloured material to add to the gay appearance. When all this was done, the unfortunate servants were called before mother and commanded to wear only the cleanest of clean clothes.

In the kitchens there was tremendous activity; food was being prepared in enormous quantities. Tibet is a natural refrigerator, food can be prepared and kept for an almost indefinite time. The climate is very, very cold, and dry with it. But even when the temperature rises, the dryness keeps stored food good. Meat will keep for about a year, while grain keeps for hundreds of years. Buddhists do not kill, so the only meat available is from animals which have fallen over cliffs, or been killed by accident. Our larders were well stocked with such meat. There are butchers in Tibet, but they are of an “untouchable” caste, and the more orthodox families do not deal with them at all.

Mother had decided to give the guests a rare and expensive treat. She was going to give them preserved rhododendron blooms. Weeks before, servants had ridden out from the courtyard to go to the foothills of the Himalaya where the choicest blooms were to be found. In our country, rhododendron trees grow to a huge size, and with an astonishing variety of colours and scents. Those blooms which have not quite reached maturity are picked and most carefully washed. Carefully, because if there is any bruising, the preserve will be ruined. Then each flower is immersed in a mixture of water and honey in a large glass jar, with special care to avoid trapping any air. The jar is sealed, and every day for weeks after, the jars are placed in the sunlight and turned at regular intervals, so that all parts of the flower are adequately exposed to the light. The flower grows slowly, and becomes filled with nectar manufactured from the honey-water. Some people like to expose the flower to the air for a few days before eating, so that it dries and becomes a little crisp, but without losing flavour or appearance.

These people also sprinkle a little sugar on the petals to imitate snow. Father grumbled about the expense of these preserves: “We could have bought ten yak with calves for what you have spent on these pretty flowers,” he said. Mother’s reply was typical of women: “Don’t be a fool! We must make a show, and anyhow, this is my side of the house.”

Another delicacy was shark’s fin. This was brought from China sliced up, and made into soup. Someone had said that “shark’s fin soup is the world’s greatest gastronomic treat.” To me the stuff tasted terrible; it was an ordeal to swallow it, especially as by the

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time it reached Tibet, the original shark owner would not have recognized it. To state it mildly, it was slightly “off”. That, to some, seemed to enhance the flavour.

My favorite was succulent young bamboo shoots, also brought from China. These could be cooked in various ways, but I preferred them raw with just a dab of salt. My choice was just the newly opening yellow-green ends. I am afraid that many shoots, before cooking, lost their ends in a manner at which the cook could only guess and not prove! Rather a pity, because the cook also preferred them that way.

Cooks in Tibet are men; women are no good at stirring tsampa; or making exact mixtures. Women take a handful of this, slap in a lump of that, and season with hope that it will be right. Men are more thorough, more painstaking, and so are better cooks. Women are all right for dusting, talking, and, of course, for a few other things. Not for making tsampa, though.

Tsampa is the main food of Tibetans. Some people live on tsampa and tea from their first meal in life to their last. It is made from barley which is roasted to a nice crisp golden brown. Then the barley kernels are cracked so that the flour is exposed, then it is roasted again. This flour is then put in a bowl, and hot buttered tea is added. The mixture is stirred until it attains the consistency of dough. Salt, borax, and yak butter are added to taste. The result—tsampa—can be rolled into slabs, made into buns, or even molded into decorative shapes. Tsampa is monotonous stuff alone, but it really is a very compact, concentrated food which will sustain life at all altitudes and under all conditions.

While some servants were making tsampa, others were making butter. Our butter-making methods could not be commended on hygienic grounds. Our churns were large goat-skin bags, with the hair inside. They were filled with yak or goat milk and the neck was then twisted, turned over, and tied to make it leakproof. The whole thing was then bumped up and down until butter was formed. We had a special butter-making floor which had stone protuberances about eighteen inches high. The bags full of milk were lifted and dropped on to these protuberances, which had the effect of “churning” the milk. It was monotonous to see and hear perhaps ten servants lifting and dropping these bags hour after hour. There was the indrawn “uh uh” as the bag was lifted, and the squashy “zunk” as it was dropped. Sometimes a carelessly handled or old bag would burst. I remember one really hefty fellow who was showing off his strength. He was working twice as fast as anyone else, and the veins were standing out on his neck with the exertion.

Someone said: “You are getting old, Timon, you are slowing up.”

Timon grunted with rage and grasped the neck of the bag in his mighty hands; lifted it, and dropped the bag down. But his strength had done its work. The bag dropped, but Timon still had his hands—and the neck—in the air. Square on the stone protuberance dropped the bag. Up shot a column of half-formed butter. Straight into the face of a stupefied Timon it went. Into his mouth, eyes, ears, and hair. Running down his body, covering him with twelve to fifteen gallons of golden slush.

Mother, attracted by the noise, rushed in. It was the only time I have known her to be

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speechless. It may have been rage at the loss of the butter, or because she thought the poor fellow was choking; but she ripped off the torn goat-skin and thwacked poor Timon over the head with it. He lost his footing on the slippery floor, and dropped into the spreading butter mess.

Clumsy workers, such as Timon, could ruin the butter. If they were careless when plunging the bags on to the protruding stones, they would cause the hair inside the bags to tear loose and become mixed with the butter. No one minded picking a dozen or two hairs out of the butter, but whole wads of it was frowned upon. Such butter was set aside for use in the lamps or for distribution to beggars, who would heat it and strain it through a piece of cloth.

Also set aside for beggars were the “mistakes” in culinary preparations. If a household wanted to let the neighbors know what a high standard was set, really good food was prepared and set before the beggars as “mistakes”. These happy, well-fed gentlemen would then wander round to the other houses saying how well they had eaten. The neighbors would respond by seeing that the beggars had a very good meal. There is much to be said for the life of a beggar in Tibet. They never want; by using the “tricks of their trade” they can live exceedingly well. There is no disgrace in begging in most of the Eastern countries. Many monks beg their way from lamasery to lamasery. It is a recognized practice and is not considered any worse than is, say, collecting for charities in other countries. Those who feed a monk on his way are considered to have done a good deed. Beggars, too; have their code. If a man gives to a beggar, that beggar will stay out of the way and will not approach the donor again for a certain time.

The two priests attached to our household also had their part in the preparations for the coming event. They went to each animal carcass in our larders and said prayers for the souls of the animals who had inhabited those bodies. It was our belief that if an animal was killed—even by accident—and eaten, humans would be under a debt to that animal. Such debts were paid by having a priest pray over the animal body in the hope of ensuring that the animal reincarnated into a higher status in the next life upon earth. In the lamaseries and temples some monks devoted their whole time praying for animals. Our priests had the task of praying over the horses, before a long journey, prayers to avoid the horses becoming too tired. In this connection, our horses were never worked for two days together. If a horse was ridden on one day, then it had to be rested the next day. The same rule applied to the work animals.

And they all knew it. If, by any chance a horse was picked for riding, and it had been ridden the day before, it would just stand still and refuse to move. When the saddle was removed, it would turn away with a shake of the head as if to say: “Well, I’m glad that injustice has been removed!” Donkeys were worse. They would wait until they were loaded, and then they would lie down and try to roll on the load.

We had three cats, and they were on duty all the time. One lived in the stables and exercised a stern discipline over the mice. They had to be very wary mice to remain mice and not cat-food. Another cat lived in the kitchen. He was elderly, and a bit of a simpleton. His mother had been frightened by the guns of the Younghusband Expedi-

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tion in 1904, and he had been born too soon and was the only one of the litter to live. Appropriately, he was called "Younghusband". The third cat was a very respectable matron who lived with us. She was a model of maternal duty, and did her utmost to see that the cat population was not allowed to fall. When not engaged as nurse to her kittens, she used to follow mother about from room to room. She was small and black, and in spite of having a hearty appetite, she looked like a walking skeleton. Tibetan animals are not pets, nor are they slaves, they are beings with a useful purpose to serve; beings with rights just as human beings have rights. According to Buddhist belief, all animals, all creatures in fact, have souls, and are reborn to earth in successively higher stages.

Quickly the replies to our invitations came in. Men came galloping up to our gates brandishing the cleft messenger-sticks. Down from his room would come the steward to do honour to the messenger of the nobles. The man would snatch his message from the stick, and gasp out the verbal version. Then he would sag at the knees and sink to the ground with exquisite histrionic art to indicate that he had given all his strength to deliver his message to the House of Rampa. Our servants would play their part by crowding round with many clucks: "Poor fellow, he made a wonderfully quick journey. Burst his heart with the speed, no doubt. Poor, noble fellow!"

I once disgraced myself completely by piping up : "Oh no he hasn't. I saw him resting a little way out so that he could make a final dash." It will be discreet to draw a veil of silence over the painful scene which followed.

At last the day arrived. The day I dreaded, when my career was to be decided for me, with no choice on my part. The first rays of the sun were peeping over the distant mountains when a servant dashed into my room. "What? Not up yet, Tuesday Lobsang Rampa? My, you are a lie-a-bed! It's four o'clock, and there is much to be done. Get up!"

I pushed aside my blanket and got to my feet. For me this day was to point the path of my life. In Tibet, two names are given, the first being the day of the week on which one was born. I was born on a Tuesday, so Tuesday was my first name. Then Lobsang, that was the name given to me by my parents. But if a boy should enter a lamasery he would be given another name, his "monk name". Was I to be given another name? Only the passing hours would tell. I, at seven, wanted to be a boatman swaying and tossing on the River Tsang-po, forty miles away. But wait a minute; did I? Boatmen are of low caste because they use boats of yak hide stretched over wooden formers. Boatman! Low caste? No! I wanted to be a professional flyer of kites.

That was better, to be as free as the air, much better than being in a degrading little skin boat drifting on a turgid stream. A kite flyer, that is what I would be, and make wonderful kites with huge heads and glaring eyes. But today the priest-astrologers would have their say. Perhaps I'd left it a bit late, I could not get out of the window and escape now. Father would soon send men to bring me back. No, after all, I was a Rampa, and had to follow the steps of tradition. Maybe the astrologers would say that I should be a kite flyer. I could only wait and see.



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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **END OF MY CHILDHOOD**

“Ow ! Yulgye, you are pulling my head off! I shall be as bald as a monk if you don’t stop.”

“Hold your peace, Tuesday Lobsang. Your pigtail must be straight and well buttered or your Honourable Mother will be after my skin.”

“But Yulgye, you don’t have to be so rough, you are twisting my head off.”

“Oh I can’t bother about that, I’m in a hurry.”

So there I was, sitting on the floor, with a tough manservant winding me up by the pigtail! Eventually the wretched thing was as stiff as a frozen yak, and shining like moonlight on a lake. Mother was in a whirl, moving round so fast that I felt almost as if I had several mothers. There were last-minute orders, final preparations, and much excited talk. Yaso, two years older than I, was bustling about like a woman of forty. Father had shut himself in his private room and was well out of the uproar. I wished I could have joined him!

For some reason mother had arranged for us to go to the Jo kang, the Cathedral of Lhasa. Apparently we had to give a religious atmosphere to the later proceedings. At about ten in the morning (Tibetan times are very elastic), a triple-toned gong was sounded to call us to our assembly point. We all mounted ponies: father, mother, Yaso, and about five others, including a very reluctant me. We turned across the Lingkhör road, and left at the foot of the Potala. This is a mountain of buildings, four hundred feet high and twelve hundred feet long. Past the village of Sho we went, along the plain of the Kyi Chu, until half an hour later we stood in front of the Jo kang. Around it clustered small houses, shops and stalls to lure the pilgrims. Thirteen hundred years the Cathedral had stood here to welcome the devout. Inside, the stone floors were grooved inches deep by the passage of so many worshippers.

Pilgrims moved reverently around the Inner Circuit, each turning the hundreds of

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prayer-wheels as they passed, and repeating incessantly the mantra: Om! Mani pad me Hum! Huge wooden beams, black with age, supported the roof, and the heavy odour of constantly burning incense drifted around like light summer clouds at the crest of a mountain. Around the walls were golden statues of the deities of our faith. Stout metal screens, with a coarse mesh so as not to obstruct the view, protected the statues from those whose cupidity overcame their reverence. Most of the more familiar statues were partly buried by the precious stones and gems which had been heaped around them by the pious who had sought favours. Candlesticks of solid gold held candles which burned continually, and whose light had not been extinguished during the past thirteen hundred years. From dark recesses came the sounds of bells, gongs, and the lowing bray of the conches. We made our circuit as tradition demanded. Our devotions completed, we went on to the flat roof. Only the favoured few could visit here; father, as one of the Custodians, always came.

Our form of governments (yes, plural), may be of interest. At the head of the State and Church, the final Court of Appeal, there was the Dalai Lama. Anyone in the country could petition him. If the petition or request was fair, or if an injustice had been done, the Dalai Lama saw that the request was granted, or the injustice rectified. It is not unreasonable to say that everyone in the country, probably without exception, either loved or revered him.

He was an autocrat; he used power and domination, but never did he use these for his own gain, only for the good of the country. He knew of the coming Communist invasion, even though it lay many years ahead, and temporary eclipse of freedom, that is why a very small number of us were specially trained so that the arts of the priests should not be forgotten.

After the Dalai Lama there were two Councils, that is why I wrote "governments". The first was the Ecclesiastical Council. The four members of it were monks of Lama status. They were responsible, under the Inmost One, for all the affairs of the lamaseries and nunneries. All ecclesiastical matters came before them.

The Council of Ministers came next. This Council had four members, three lay and one cleric. They dealt with the affairs of the country as a whole, and were responsible for integrating the Church and State.

Two officials, who may be termed Prime Ministers, for that is what they were, acted as "Liaison Officers" between the two Councils, and put their views before the Dalai Lama. They were of considerable importance during the rare meetings of the National Assembly. This was a body of some fifty men representing all the most important families and lamaseries in Lhasa. They met only during the gravest emergencies, such as in 1904, when the Dalai Lama went to Mongolia when the British invaded Lhasa. In connection with this, many Western people have the strange notion that the Inmost One was cowardly in "running away". He did not "run away". Wars on Tibet may be likened to a game of chess. If the king is taken, the game is won. The Dalai Lama was our "king".

Without him there would be nothing to fight for: he had to go to safety in order to keep the country together. Those who accuse him of cowardice in any form simply do

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not know what they are talking about.

The National Assembly could be increased to nearly four hundred members when all the leaders from the provinces came in. There are five provinces: The Capital, as Lhasa was often called, was in the province of U-Tsang. Shigatse is in the same district. Gartok is western Tibet, Chang is northern Tibet, while Kham and Lho-dzong are the eastern and southern provinces respectively. With the passage of the years the Dalai Lama increased his power and did more and more without assistance from the Councils or Assembly. And never was the country better governed.

The view from the temple roof was superb. To the east stretched the Plain of Lhasa, green and lush and dotted with trees. Water sparkled through the trees, the rivers of Lhasa tinkling along to join the Tsang Po forty miles away. To the north and south rose the great mountain ranges enclosing our valley and making us seem secluded from the rest of the world. Lamaseries abounded on the lower levels. Higher, the small hermitages perched precariously on precipitous slopes. Westwards loomed the twin mountains of the Potala and Chakpori, the latter was known as the Temple of Medicine. Between these mountains the Western Gate glinted in the cold morning light. The sky was a deep purple emphasized by the pure white of the snow on the distant mountain ranges. Light, wispy clouds drifted high overhead. Much nearer, in the city itself, we looked down on the Council Hall nestling against the northern wall of the Cathedral. The Treasury was quite near, and surrounding it all were the stalls of the traders and the market in which one could buy almost anything. Close by, slightly to the east, a nunnery jostled the precincts of the Disposers of the Dead.

In the Cathedral grounds there was the never-ceasing babble of visitors to this, one of the most sacred places of Buddhism. The chatter of pilgrims who had traveled far, and who now brought gifts in the hope of obtaining a holy blessing. Some there were who brought animals saved from the butchers, and purchased with scarce money. There is much virtue in saving life, of animal and of man, and much credit would accrue.

As we stood gazing at the old, but ever-new scenes, we heard the rise and fall of monks' voices in psalmody, the deep bass of the older men and the high treble of the acolytes. There came the rumble and boom of the drums and the golden voices of the trumpets. Skirlings, and muffled throbs, and a sensation as of being caught up in a hypnotic net of emotions.

Monks bustled around dealing with their various affairs. Some with yellow robes and some in purple. The more numerous were in russet red, these were the "ordinary" monks. Those of much gold were from the Potala, as were those in cherry vestments. Acolytes in white, and police monks in dark maroon bustled about. All, or nearly all, had one thing in common: no matter how new their robes, they almost all had patches which were replicas of the patches on Buddha's robes. Foreigners who have seen Tibetan monks, or have seen pictures of them, sometimes remark on the "patched appearance". The patches, then, are part of the dress.

The monks of the twelve-hundred-year-old Ne-Sar lamasery do it properly and have their patches of a lighter shade! Monks wear the red robes of the Order; there are many

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shades of red caused by the manner in which the woolen cloth is dyed. Maroon to brick red, it is still “red”. Certain official monks employed solely at the Potala wear gold sleeveless jackets over their red robes. Gold is a sacred colour in Tibet—gold is untarnishable and so always pure—and it is the official colour of the Dalai Lama. Some monks, or high lamas in personal attendance on the Dalai Lama, are permitted to wear gold robes over their ordinary ones.

As we looked over the roof of the Jo-kang we could see many such gold jacketed figures, and rarely one of the Peak officials. We looked up at the prayer-flags fluttering, and at the brilliant domes of the Cathedral. The sky looked beautiful, purple, with little flecks of wispy clouds, as if an artist had lightly flicked the canvas of heaven with a white-loaded brush. Mother broke the spell: “Well, we are wasting time, I shudder to think what the servants are doing. We must hurry!” So off on our patient ponies, clattering along the Lingkhor road, each step bringing me nearer to what I termed “The Ordeal”, but which mother regarded as her “Big Day”.

Back at home, mother had a final check of all that had been done and then we had a meal to fortify us for the events to come. We well knew that at times such as these, the guests would be well filled and well satisfied, but the poor hosts would be empty. There would be no time for us to eat later. With much clattering of instruments, the monk-musicians arrived and were shown into the gardens. They were laden with trumpets, clarinets, gongs, and drums. Their cymbals were hung round their necks. Into the gardens they went, with much chatter, and called for beer to get them into the right mood for good playing. For the next half-hour there were horrible honks, and strident bleats from the trumpets as the monks prepared their instruments.

Uproar broke out in the courtyard as the first of the guests were sighted, riding in an armed cavalcade of men with fluttering pennants. The entrance gates were flung open, and two columns of our servants lined each side to give welcome to the arrivals. The steward was on hand with his two assistants who carried an assortment of the silk scarves which are used in Tibet as a form of salutation. There are eight qualities of scarves, and the correct one must be presented or offense may be implied! The Dalai Lama gives, and receives, only the first grade. We call these scarves “khata”, and the method of presentation is this: the donor if of equal rank, stands well back with the arms fully extended. The recipient also stands well back with arms extended. The donor makes a short bow and places the scarf across the wrists of the recipient, who bows, takes the scarf from the wrists, turns it over in approval, and hands it to a servant. In the case of a donor giving a scarf to a person of much higher rank, he or she kneels with tongue extended (a Tibetan greeting similar to lifting the hat) and places the khata at the feet of the recipient. The recipient in such cases places his scarf across the neck of the donor. In Tibet, gifts must always be accompanied by the appropriate khata, as must letters of congratulation. The Government used yellow scarves in place of the normal white. The Dalai Lama, if he desired to show the very highest honour to a person, would place a khata about a person's neck and would tie a red silk thread with a triple knot into the khata. If at the same time he showed his hands palm up—one was indeed honoured. We Tibetans are of the firm belief that one's whole history is written on the palm of the hand, and the Dalai Lama,

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showing his hands thus, would prove the friendliest intentions towards one. In later years I had this honour twice.

Our steward stood at the entrance, with an assistant on each side. He would bow to new arrivals, accept their khata, and pass it on to the assistant on the left. At the same time the assistant on his right would hand him the correct grade of scarf with which to return the salutation. This he would take and place across the wrists, or over the neck (according to rank), of the guest. All these scarves were used and reused.

The steward and his assistants were becoming busy. Guests were arriving in large numbers. From neighboring estates, from Lhasa city, and from outlying districts, they all came clattering along the Lingkor road, to turn into our private drive in the shadow of the Potala. Ladies who had ridden a long distance wore a leather face-mask to protect the skin and complexion from the grit-laden wind. Frequently a crude resemblance of the wearer's features would be painted on the mask. Arrived at her destination, the lady would doff her mask as well as her yak-hide cloak. I was always fascinated by the features painted on the masks, the uglier or older the woman, the more beautiful and younger would be her mask-features!

In the house there was great activity. More and more seat-cushions were brought from the storerooms. We do not use chairs in Tibet, but sit cross-legged on cushions which are about two and a half feet square and about nine inches thick. The same cushions are used for sleeping upon, but then several are put together. To us they are far more comfortable than chairs or high beds.

Arriving guests were given buttered tea and led to a large room which had been converted into a refectory. Here they were able to choose refreshments to sustain them until the real party started. About forty women of the leading families had arrived, together with their women attendants. Some of the ladies were being entertained by mother, while others wandered around the house, inspecting the furnishings, and guessing their value. The place seemed to be overrun with women of all shapes, sizes, and ages.

They appeared from the most unusual places, and did not hesitate one moment to ask passing servants what this cost, or what that was worth. They behaved, in short, like women the world over. Sister Yaso was parading around in very new clothes, with her hair done in what she regarded as the latest style, but which to me seemed terrible; but I was always biased when it came to women. Certain it was that on this day they seemed to get in the way. There was another set of women to complicate matters: the high-class woman in Tibet was expected to have huge stores of clothing and ample jewels. These she had to display, and as this would have entailed much changing and dressing, special girls— "chung girls"— were employed to act as mannequins. They paraded around in mother's clothes, sat and drank innumerable cups of butter-tea, and then went and changed into different clothing and jewelry. They mixed with the guests and became, to all intents and purposes, mother's assistant hostesses. Throughout the day these women would change their attire perhaps five or six times.

The men were more interested in the entertainers in the gardens. A troupe of acrobats had been brought in to add a touch of fun. Three of them held up a pole about fifteen



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feet high, and another acrobat climbed up and stood on his head on the top. Then the others snatched away the pole, leaving him to fall, turn, and land catlike on his feet. Some small boys were watching, and immediately rushed away to a secluded spot to emulate the performance.

They found a pole about eight or ten feet high, held it up, and the most daring climbed up and tried to stand on his head. Down he came, with an awful “crump”, straight on top of the others. However, their heads were thick, and apart from egg-sized bruises, no harm was done. Mother appeared, leading the rest of the ladies to see the entertainments, and listen to the music. The latter was not difficult; the musicians were now well warmed up with copious amounts of Tibetan beer.

For this occasion, mother was particularly well dressed. She was wearing a yak-wool skirt of deep russet-red, reaching almost to the ankles. Her high boots of Tibetan felt were of the purest white, with blood-red soles, and tastefully arranged red piping. Her bolero-type jacket was of a reddish-yellow, somewhat like father’s monk robe. In my later medical days, I should have described it as “iodine on bandage!” Beneath it she wore a blouse of purple silk. These colours all harmonized, and had been chosen to represent the different classes of monks’ garments. Across her right shoulder was a silk brocade sash which was caught at the left side of her waist by a massive gold circlet. From the shoulder to the waist-knot the sash was blood red, but from that point it shaded from pale lemon-yellow to deep saffron when it reached the skirt hem.

Around her neck she had a gold cord which supported the three amulet bags which she always wore. These had been given to her on her marriage to father. One was from her family, one from father’s family, and one, an unusual honour, was from the Dalai Lama. She wore much jewelry, because Tibetan women wear jewelry and ornaments in accordance with their station in life. A husband is expected to buy ornaments and jewelry whenever he has a rise in status.

Mother had been busy for days past having her hair arranged in a hundred and eight plaits, each about as thick as a piece of whipcord. A hundred and eight is a Tibetan sacred number, and ladies with sufficient hair to make this number of plaits were considered to be most fortunate. The hair, parted in the Madonna style, was supported on a wooden framework worn on top of the head like a hat. Of red lacquered wood, it was studded with diamonds, jade, and gold discs. The hair trailed over it like rambler roses on a trellis.

Mother had a string of coral shapes depending from her ear. The weight was so great that she had to use a red thread around the ear to support it, or risk having the lobe torn: The earring reached nearly to her waist; I watched in fascination to see how she could turn her head to the left!

People were walking about, admiring the gardens, or sitting in groups discussing social affairs. The ladies, in particular, were busy with their talk. “Yes, my dear, Lady Doring is having a new floor laid. Finely ground pebbles polished to a high gloss.”

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“Have you heard that that young lama who was staying with Lady Rakasha...” etc.

But everyone was really waiting for the main item of the day. All this was a mere warming-up for the events to come, when the priest-astrologers would forecast my future and direct the path I should take through life. Upon them depended the career I should undertake. As the day grew old and the lengthening shadows crawled more quickly across the ground, the activities of the guests became slower. They were satiated with refreshments, and in a receptive mood. As the piles of food grew less, tired servants brought more and that, too, went with the passage of time. The hired entertainers grew weary and one by one slipped away to the kitchens for a rest and more beer.

The musicians were still in fine fettle, blowing their trumpets, clashing the cymbals, and thwacking the drums with gay abandon. With all the noise and uproar, the birds had been scared from their usual roosting places in the trees. And not only the birds were scared. The cats had dived precipitately into some safe refuge with the arrival of the first noisy guests. Even the huge black mastiffs which guarded the place were silent, their deep baying stilled in sleep. They had been fed and fed until they could eat no more.

In the walled gardens, as the day grew yet darker, small boys flitted like gnomes between the cultivated trees, swinging lighted butter-lamps and smoke incense censers, and at times leaping into the lower branches for a carefree frolic.

Dotted about the grounds were golden incense braziers sending up their thick columns of fragrant smoke. Attending them were old women who also twirled clacking prayer-wheels, each revolution of which sent thousands of prayers heavenwards.

Father was in a state of perpetual fright! His walled gardens were famous throughout the country for their expensive imported plants and shrubs. Now, to his way of thinking, the place was like a badly run zoo. He wandered around wringing his hands and uttering little moans of anguish when some guest stopped and fingered a bud. In particular danger were the apricot and pear trees, and the little dwarf apple trees. The larger and taller trees, poplar, willow, juniper, birch, and cypress, were festooned with streams of prayer-flags which fluttered gently in the soft evening breeze.

Eventually the day died as the sun set behind the far-distant peaks of the Himalayas. From the lamaseries came the sound of trumpets signaling the passing of yet another day, and with it hundreds of butter-lamps were set alight. They depended from the branches of trees, they swung from the projecting eaves of the houses, and others floated on the placid waters of the ornamental Lake. Here they grounded, like boats on a sandbar, on the water-lily leaves, there they drifted towards the floating swans seeking refuge near the island.

The sound of a deep-toned gong, and everyone turned to watch the approaching procession. In the gardens a large marquee had been erected, with one completely open side. Inside was a raised dais on which were four of our Tibetan seats. Now the procession approached the dais. Four servants carried upright poles, with large flares at the upper end. Then came four trumpeters with silver trumpets sounding a fanfare. Following them, mother and father reached the dais and stepped upon it. Then two old men,

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very old men, from the lamasery of the State Oracle. These two old men from Nechung were the most experienced astrologers in the country. Their predictions have been proved correct time after time. Last week they had been called to predict for the Dalai Lama. Now they were going to do the same for a seven-year-old boy. For days they had been busy at their charts and computations. Long had been their discussions about trines, ecliptics, sesqui-quadrates, and the opposing influence of this or that. I will discuss astrology in a later chapter.

Two lamas carried the astrologers' notes and charts. Two others stepped forward and helped the old seers to mount the steps of the dais. Side by side they stood, like two old ivory carvings. Their gorgeous robes of yellow Chinese brocade merely emphasized their age. Upon their heads they wore tall priests' hats, and their wrinkled necks seemed to wilt beneath the weight. People gathered around and sat on the ground on cushions brought by the servants. All gossip stopped, as people strained their ears to catch the shrill, piping voice of the astrologer-in-chief. "Lha dre mi cho-nang-chig," he said (Gods, devils, and men all behave in the same way), so the probable future can be foretold. On he droned, for an hour and then stopped for a ten-minute rest. For yet another hour he went on outlining the future. "Ha-le! Ha-le!" (Extraordinary! Extraordinary!), exclaimed the entranced audience.

And so it was foretold. A boy of seven to enter a lamasery, after a hard feat of endurance, and there be trained as a priest-surgeon. To suffer great hardships to leave the homeland, and go among strange people. To lose all and have to start again, and eventually to succeed.

Gradually the crowd dispersed. Those who had come from afar would stay the night at our house and depart in the morning. Others would travel with their retinues and with flares to light the way. With much clattering of hooves, and the hoarse shouts of men, they assembled in the courtyard. Once again the ponderous gate swung open, and the company streamed through. Growing fainter in the distance was the clop-clop of the horses, and the chatter of their riders, until from without there was the silence of the night.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **LAST DAYS AT HOME**

Inside the house there was still much activity. Tea was still being consumed in huge quantities, and food was disappearing as last-minute revellers fortified themselves against the coming night. All the rooms were occupied, and there was no room for me. Disconsolately I wandered around, idly kicking at stones and anything else in the way, but even that did not bring inspiration. No one took any notice of me, the guests were tired and happy, the servants were tired and irritable. "The horses have more feeling," I grumbled to myself, "I will go and sleep with them."

The stables were warm, and the fodder was soft, but for a time sleep would not come. Each time I dozed a horse would nudge me, or a sudden burst of sound from the house would rouse me. Gradually the noises were stilled. I raised myself to one elbow and looked out, the lights were one by one flickering to blackness. Soon there was only the cold blue moonlight reflecting vividly from the snow-capped mountains. The horses slept, some on their feet and some on their sides. I too slept. The next morning I was awakened by a rough shake and a voice saying: "Come along, Tuesday Lobsang. I have got to get the horses ready and you are in the way." So I got up and made my way into the house in search of food. There was much activity. People were preparing to leave, and mother was flitting from group to group for a last-minute chat. Father was discussing improvements to the house and to the gardens. He was telling an old friend of his that he intended having glass imported from India so that our house would have glazed windows. In Tibet there was no glass, none was made in the country, and the cost of bringing it from India was very high indeed. Tibetan windows have frames upon which is stretched paper which is highly waxed and translucent, but not transparent. Outside the windows were heavy wooden shutters, not so much to keep burglars away as to prevent the ingress of grit carried by the strong winds. This grit (sometimes it was more like small pebbles) would tear through any unprotected windows. It would also deeply cut exposed hands and faces, and during the season of strong winds, such journeys were fraught with danger.

The people of Lhasa used to keep a wary eye upon the Peak and when it suddenly became hidden in a black haze everyone used to dash for shelter before the whipping,

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blood-bringing wind caught them. But not only humans were on the alert, animals also were on the watch, and it was no unusual sight to see horses and dogs leading the humans in the rush for shelter. Cats were never caught in a storm, and yaks were quite immune.

With the departure of the last of the guests I was called before father who said: "Go to the shopping centre and buy your needs. Tzu knows what is required." I thought of the things I would need: a tsampa bowl made of wood, a cup, and a rosary. The cup would be in three parts: a stand, the cup, and its lid. This would be of silver. The rosary would be of wood, with its hundred and eight beads highly polished. A hundred and eight, the sacred number, also indicates the things which a monk has to remember.

We set off, Tzu on his horse, and I on my pony. As we left the courtyard we turned right, later turning right again as we left the Ring Road past the Potala to enter the shopping centre. I looked about me as if seeing the town for the first time. I was greatly afraid that I was seeing it for the last time! The shops were crowded with chauffeuring merchants who had just arrived in Lhasa. Some were bringing tea from China, and others had brought cloth from India. We made our way through the crowd to the shops we wished to visit; every so often Tzu would call out a greeting to some old friend of former years.

I had to get a robe of russet red. I was going to have it rather on the large size, not merely because I was growing, but for an equally practical reason. In Tibet men wear voluminous robes which are tied tightly at the waist. The upper portion is pulled up and forms a pouch which is the repository for all those items which the Tibetan male finds it necessary to carry. The average monk, for instance, will carry in this pouch his tsampa bowl, cup, a knife, various amulets, a rosary, a bag of roasted barley and, not infrequently, a supply of tsampa. But remember, a monk carries upon his person all his worldly possessions.

My pathetic little purchases were rigidly supervised by Tzu, who permitted only the barest essentials, and those of merely mediocre quality as befitted a "poor acolyte". They included sandals with yak-leather soles, a small leather bag for roasted barley, a wooden tsampa bowl, wooden cup—not the silver affair I had hoped for!—and a carving knife. This, together with a very plain rosary which I had to polish myself, were to be my only possessions. Father was a millionaire several times over, with huge estates all over the country, with jewels, and indeed much gold. But I, while I was training, while father lived, I was to be just a very poor monk.

I looked again at the street, at those two-storied buildings with the long, projecting eaves. I looked again at the shops with the sharks' fins and the saddle covers displayed on the booths outside their doors. I listened once more to the cheerful banter of the traders and their customers haggling goodnaturedly over the prices to be paid. The street had never looked more attractive and I thought of the fortunate people who saw it every day and would continue to see it every day.

Stray dogs ambled around, sniffing here and there, exchanging growls, horses neighed softly to each other as they awaited the pleasure of their masters. Yaks groaned throatily as they meandered through the pedestrian throng. What mysteries lurked be-



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hind those paper-covered windows. What wonderful stores of goods, from all parts of the world, had passed through those sturdy wooden doors, and what tales those open shutters would tell if they could speak.

All this I gazed upon as upon an old friend. It did not occur to me that I would ever see these streets again, even though but rarely. I thought of the things I would have liked to have done, of the things I would have liked to buy. My reverie was shatteringly interrupted. A hand immense and menacing descended upon me, caught my ear and twisted it fiercely, while the voice of Tzu bellowed for all the world to hear: "Come on, Tuesday Lobsang, are you dead on your feet? I don't know what boys are coming to nowadays. Wasn't like this when I was a lad."

Tzu did not seem to mind if I stayed behind without my ear, or retained it by following him. There was no choice but to "come on." All the way home Tzu rode ahead, mumbling and moaning about the "present generation, good-for-nothing lot, bone-idle lay-about living in a daze." At least there was one bright spot, as we turned into the Lingkor road there was a quite bitter wind. Tzu's great bulk ahead of me gave me a sheltered path.

At home, mother had a look at the things which I had bought. To my regret she agreed that they were good enough. I had been cherishing the hope that she would overrule Tzu, and say that I could have better quality articles. So once again my hopes of having a silver cup were shattered and I had to make do with the wooden one turned on a hand-lathe in the bazaars of Lhasa. I was not to be left alone for my last week. Mother dragged me round to the other big houses in Lhasa so that I could pay my respects, not that I was feeling respectful! Mother reveled in the journeyings, in the interchange of social conversation, and in the polite tittle-tattle which made up the everyday round. I was bored stiff; to me all this was a genuine ordeal as I was definitely not born with the attributes which make one suffer fools gladly. I wanted to be out in the open enjoying myself for the few days remaining. I wanted to be out flying my kites, jumping with my pole, and practicing archery, instead of which I had to be dragged around like a prize yak, being shown off to frumpish old women who had nothing to do all day but to sit on silk cushions and call for a servant in order to gratify their slightest whim.

But it was not only mother who caused me so much heart-burning. Father had to visit the Drebung Lamasery and I was taken along to see the place. Drebung is the largest lamasery in the world, with its ten thousand monks, its high temples, little stone houses, and terraced buildings rising tier upon tier. This community was like a walled town, and like a good town, it was self supporting. Drebung means "Rice Heap", and from a distance it did look like a heap of rice, with the towers and domes gleaming in the light. Just at this time I was not in a mood to appreciate architectural beauties: I was feeling distinctly glum at having to waste precious time like this.

Father was busy with the abbot and his assistants, and I, like a waif of the storm, wandered disconsolately around. It made me shiver with fright when I saw how some of the small novices were treated. The Rice Heap was really seven lamaseries in one; seven distinct orders, seven separate colleges formed its composition. It was so large that no one man was in charge. Fourteen abbots ruled here and stern disciplinarians they were.

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I was glad when this “pleasant jaunt across a sunlit plain”—to quote father—came to an end, but more glad to know that I was not going to be consigned to Drebung, or to Sera, three miles north of Lhasa.

At last the week drew to an end. My kites were taken from me and given away; my bows and beautifully feathered arrows were broken to signify that I was no longer a child and had no use for such things. I felt that my heart, too, was being broken, but no one seemed to think that important.

At nightfall father sent for me and I went to his room, with its wonderful decorations, and the old and valuable books lining the walls. He sat by the side of the main altar, which was in his room, and bade me kneel before him. This was to be the Ceremony of the Opening of the Book. In this large volume, some three feet wide by twelve inches long, were recorded all the details of our family for centuries past. It gave the names of the first of our line, and gave details of the deeds which caused them to be raised to the nobility. Recorded here were the services we had done for our country and for our Ruler. Upon the old, yellowed pages I read history. Now, for the second time, the Book was open for me.

First it had been to record my conception and birth. Here were the details upon which the astrologers based their forecasts. Here were the actual charts prepared at the time. Now I had to sign the Book myself, for tomorrow a new life for me would start when I entered the lamasery.

The heavy carved wooden covers were slowly replaced. The golden clasps pressing the thick, handmade sheets of juniper paper were clipped on. The Book was heavy, even father staggered a little beneath its weight as he rose to replace it in the golden casket which was its protection. Reverently he turned to lower the casket into the deep stone recess beneath the altar. Over a small silver brazier he heated wax, poured it upon the stone lid of the recess, and impressed his seal, so that the Book would not be disturbed.

He turned to me and settled himself comfortably on his cushions. A touch of a gong at his elbow, and a servant brought him buttered tea. There was a long silence, and then he told me of the secret history of Tibet; history going back thousands and thousands of years, a story which was old before the Flood. He told me of the time when Tibet had been washed by an ancient sea, and of how excavations had proved it. Even now, he said, anyone digging near Lhasa could bring to light fossilized sea-animals and strange shells.

There were artifacts, too, of strange metal and unknown purpose. Often monks who visited certain caves in the district would discover them and bring them to father. He showed me some. Then his mood changed.

Because of the Law, to the high-born shall be shown austerity, while to the low shall be shown compassion, he said. “You will undergo a severe ordeal before you are permitted to enter the lamasery.” He enjoined upon me the utter necessity of implicit obedience to all commands which would be given to me. His concluding remarks were not conducive to a good night’s sleep; he said: “My son, you think I am hard and uncaring,

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but I care only for the name of the family. I say to you: if you fail in this test for entry, do not return here. You will be as a stranger to this household.” With that, with no further word, he motioned me to leave him.

Earlier in the evening I had said my farewells to my sister Yaso. She had been upset, for we had played together so often and she was now but nine years of age, while I would be seven—tomorrow. Mother was not to be found. She had gone to bed and I was not able to say good-bye to her. I made my lonely way to my own room for the last time and arranged the cushions which formed my bed. I lay down, but not to sleep. For a very long time I lay there thinking of the things my father had told me that night. Thinking of the strong dislike father had for children, and thinking of the dreaded morrow when for the first time I would sleep away from home. Gradually the moon moved across the sky. Outside a night bird fluttered on the window sill. From the roof above came the flap-flap of prayer-flags slapping against bare wooden poles. I fell asleep, but as the first feeble rays of the sun replaced the light of the moon, I was awakened by a servant and given a bowl of tsampa and a cup of buttered tea. As I was eating this meager fare, Tzu bustled into the room. “Well, boy,” he said, “our ways part. Thank goodness for that. Now I can go back to my horses. But acquit yourself well; remember all that I have taught you.” With that he turned upon his heel and left the room.

Although I did not appreciate it at the time, this was the kindest method. Emotional farewells would have made it very much more difficult for me to leave home—for the first time, for ever, as I thought. If mother had been up to see me off then no doubt I should have tried to persuade her to allow me to remain at home. Many Tibetan children have quite soft lives, mine was hard by any standard, and the lack of farewells, as I later found, was on father’s order, so that I should learn discipline and firmness early in life.

I finished my breakfast, tucked my tsampa bowl and cup into the front of my robe, and rolled a spare robe and a pair of felt boots into a bundle. As I crossed the room a servant bade me go softly and not waken the sleeping household. Down the corridor I went. The false dawn had been replaced by the darkness that comes before the true dawn as I made my way down the steps and on to the road. So I left my home. Lonely, frightened, and sick at heart.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **AT THE TEMPLE GATES**

The road led straight ahead to Chakpori Lamasery, the Temple of Tibetan Medicine. A hard school, this! I walked the miles as the day grew lighter and at the gate leading to the entrance compound I met two others, who also desired admission. We warily looked each other over, and I think that none of us was much impressed by what we saw in the others. We decided that we would have to be sociable if we were going to endure the same training.

For some time we knocked timidly, and nothing happened. Then one of the others stooped and picked up a large stone and really did make enough noise to attract attention. A monk appeared, waving a stick which to our frightened eyes looked as large as a young tree. "What do you young devils want?" he exclaimed. "Do you think that I have nothing better to do than answer the door to such as you?"

"We want to be monks," I replied.

"You look more like monkeys to me," he said. "Wait there and do not move, the Master of the Acolytes will see you when he is ready." The door slammed shut, nearly knocking one of the other boys flat on his back, he having moved incautiously near.

We sat upon the ground, our legs were tired with standing. People came to the lamasery, and went. The pleasant smell of food was wafted to us through a small window, tantalizing us with the thought of satisfying our growing hunger. Food, so near, yet so utterly unattainable.

At last the door was flung open with violence, and a tall, skinny man appeared in the opening. "Well!" he roared. "And what do you miserable scamps want?"

"We want to be monks," we said.

"Goodness me," he exclaimed. "What garbage is coming to the lamasery nowadays!" He beckoned us to enter the vast walled enclosure which was the perimeter of the lamasery grounds. He asked us what we were, who we were, even why we were! We gathered, without difficulty, that he was not at all impressed with us. To one, the son of a

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herdsman, he said: "Enter quickly, if you can pass your tests you can stay." To the next: "You, boy. What did you say? Son of a butcher? A cutter-up of flesh? A transgressor of the Laws of Buddha? And you come here? Be off with you, quickly, or I will have you flogged round the road."

The poor wretched boy forgot his tiredness in a sudden burst of speed as the monk lunged at him. Wheeling in a flash he leaped forward, leaving little scuffs of disturbed dust as his feet touched the ground in his hurry.

Now I was left, alone on my seventh birthday. The gaunt monk turned his fierce gaze in my direction, almost causing me to shrivel on the spot with fright. He twitched his stick menacingly "And you? What have we here? Oho! A young prince who wants to turn religious. We must see what you are made of first, my fine fellow. See what kind of stuffing you have; this is not the place for soft and pampered princelings. Take forty paces backwards and sit in the attitude of contemplation until I tell you otherwise, and do not move an eyelash!" With that he turned abruptly and went away.

Sadly I picked up my pathetic little bundle, and took the forty steps back. On my knees I went, then sat cross-legged as commanded. So I sat throughout the day. Unmoving. The dust blew against me, forming little mounds in the cups of my upturned hands, piling on my shoulders and lodging in my hair. As the sun began to fade my hunger increased and my throat was wracked with the harshness of thirst, for I had had no food or drink since the first fight of dawn. Passing monks, and there were many, took no heed. Wandering dogs paused a while to sniff curiously, then they too went away. A gang of small boys came past. One idly flipped a stone in my direction. It struck the side of my head and caused the blood to flow. But I did not stir. I was afraid to. If I failed my endurance test my father would not allow me to enter what had been my home. There was nowhere for me to go. Nothing that I could do. I could only remain motionless, aching in every muscle, stiff in every joint.

The sun hid behind the mountains and the sky became dark. The stars shone bright against the blackness of the sky. From the lamasery windows thousands of little butter lamps flickered into flame. A chill wind, the leaves of the willows hissed and rattled, and about me there were all the faint sounds which go to make the strange noises of the night.

I still remained motionless for the strongest of reasons. I was too frightened to move and I was very stiff. Presently came the soft suah-sush of approaching monks' sandals slithering over the gritty way; the steps of an old man feeling his way in the darkness.

A form loomed up before me, the form of an old monk bent and gnarled with the passage of austere years. His hands shook with age, a matter of some concern to me when I saw that he was spilling the tea he was carrying in one hand. In the other hand he held a small bowl of tsampa. He passed them to me. At first I made no move to take them. Divining my thoughts, he said: "Take them, my son, for you can move during the hours of darkness." So I drank the tea and transferred the tsampa to my own bowl. The old monk said, "Now sleep, but at the first rays of the sun take your stance here in the same position, for this is a test, and is not the wanton cruelty which you may now consider it to be.



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Only those who pass this test can aspire to the higher ranks of our Order.” With that he gathered up the cup and the bowl and went away.

I stood and stretched my legs, then lay upon my side and finished the tsampa. Now I was really tired, so scooping a depression in the ground to accommodate my hip bone, and placing my spare robe beneath my head, I lay down.

My seven years had not been easy years. At all times father had been strict, frightfully strict, but even so this was my first night away from home and the whole day had been spent in one position, hungry, thirsty, and motionless. I had no idea of what the morrow would bring, or what more would be demanded of me. But now I had to sleep alone beneath the frosty sky, alone with my terror of the darkness, alone with my terrors of the days to come. It seemed that I had hardly closed my eyes before the sound of a trumpet awakened me. Opening my eyes, I saw that it was the false dawn, with the first light of the approaching day reflected against the skies behind the mountains. Hurriedly I sat up and resumed the posture of contemplation. Gradually the lamasery ahead of me awoke to life. First there had been the air of a sleeping town, a dead, inert hulk. Next, a gentle sighing, as of a sleeper awakening. It grew to a murmur and developed to a deep hum, like the drone of bees on a hot summer’s day. Occasionally there was the call of a trumpet, like the muted chirp of a distant bird, and the deep growl of a conch, like a bullfrog calling in a marsh. As the light increased, little groups of shaven heads passed and repassed behind the open windows, windows which in the earlier predawn light had looked like the empty eye-sockets of a clean-picked skull.

The day grew older, and I grew stiffer, but I dared not move; I dared not fall asleep, for if I moved and failed my test, then I had nowhere to go. Father had made it very clear that if the lamasery did not want me, then nor did he. Little groups of monks came out of the various buildings, going about their mysterious businesses. Small boys wandered around, sometimes kicking a shower of dust and small stones in my direction, or making ribald remarks. As there was no response from me they soon tired of the abortive sport and went away in search of more cooperative victims. Gradually, as the light at eventide began to fail, the little butter-lamps again flickered into life within the lamasery buildings. Soon the darkness was relieved merely by the faint star-glow, for this was the time when the moon rose late. In our saying, the moon was now young and could not travel fast.

I became sick with apprehension; was I forgotten? Was this another test, one in which I had to be deprived of all food? Throughout the long day I had not stirred, and now I was faint with hunger. Suddenly hope flared in me, and I almost jumped to my feet. There was a shuffling noise and a dark outline approached. Then I saw that it was a very large black mastiff dragging something along. He took no notice of me, but went on his nocturnal mission quite uncaring of my plight. My hopes fell; I could have wept. To prevent myself being so weak I reminded myself that only girls and women were as stupid as that.

At last I heard the old man approaching. This time he gazed more benignly upon me and said: “Food and drink, my son, but the end is not yet. There is still the morrow, so

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take care that you do not move, for so very many fail at the eleventh hour.” With those words he turned and went away. While he was speaking I had drunk the tea, and again transferred the tsampa to my own bowl.

Again I lay down, certainly no happier than the night before. As I lay there I wondered at the injustice of it; I did not want to be a monk of any sect, shape, or size. I had no more choice than a pack animal being driven over a mountain pass. And so I fell asleep. The next day, the third day, as I sat in my attitude of contemplation, I could feel myself becoming weaker, and giddy. The lamasery seemed to swim in a miasma compounded of buildings, bright coloured Lights, purple patches, with mountains and monks liberally interspersed. With a determined effort I managed to shake off this attack of vertigo. It really frightened me to think that I might fail now, after all the suffering I had had. By now the stones beneath me seemed to have grown knife edges which chafed me in inconvenient places. In one of my lighter moments I thought how glad I was that I was not a hen hatching eggs, and compelled to sit even longer than I.

The sun seemed to stand still; the day appeared endless, but at long last the light began to fail, and the evening wind commenced to play with a feather dropped by a passing bird. Once again the little lights appeared in the windows, one by one. “Hope I die tonight,” I thought; “can’t stick any more of this.” Just then the tall figure of the Master of the Acolytes appeared in the distant doorway.

“Boy, come here!” he called.

Trying to rise with my stiffened legs, I pitched forward on to my face. “Boy, if you want a rest you can stay there another night. I shall not wait longer.” Hastily I grabbed my bundle and tottered towards him. “Enter,” he said, “and attend evening service, then see me in the morning.”

It was warm inside, and there was the comforting smell of incense. My hunger-sharpened senses told me there was food quite near, so I followed a crowd moving to the right. Food—tsampa, buttered tea. I edged my way to the front row as if I had had a lifetime of practice. Monks made ineffectual grabs at my pigtail as I scrambled between their legs, but I was after food and nothing was going to stop me now.

Feeling a little better with some food inside me, I followed the crowd to the inner temple and the evening service. I was too tired to know anything about it, but no one took any notice of me. As the monks filed out I slipped behind a giant pillar, and stretched out on the stone floor, with my bundle beneath my head. I slept.

A stunning crash—I thought my head had split—and the sound of voices. “New boy. One of the highborn. Come on, let’s scrag him!” One of the crowd of acolytes was waving my spare robe, which he had pulled from under my head, another had my felt boots. A soft, squashy mass of tsampa caught me in the face. Blows and kicks were rained upon me, but I did not resist, thinking it might be part of the test, to see if I obeyed the sixteenth of the Laws, which ordered: Bear suffering and distress with patience and meekness.

There was a sudden loud bellow: “What’s going on here ?”

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A frightened whisper: "Oh! It's old Rattlebones on the prowl."

As I clawed the tsampa from my eyes the Master of the Acolytes reached down and dragged me to my feet by my pigtail.

"Softly! Weakling! You one of the future leaders? Bah! Take that, and that!" Blows, hard ones, absolutely showered upon me. "Worthless weakling, can't even defend yourself!" The blows seemed non-ending. I fancied I heard Old Tzu's farewell saying: "Acquit yourself, well, remember all I have taught you." Unthinkingly I turned and applied a little pressure as Tzu had taught me. The Master was caught by surprise and with a gasp of pain he flew over my head, hit the stone floor, and skidded along on his nose, taking all the skin off, and coming to rest when his head hit a stone pillar with a loud "onk!"

"Death for me," I thought, "this is the end of all my worries." The world seemed to stand still. The other boys were holding their breath. With a loud roar the tall, bony monk leaped to his feet, blood streaming from his nose. He was roaring all right, roaring with laughter. "Young gamecock, eh? Or cornered rat; which? Ah, that's what we must find out!"

Turning and pointing to a tall, ungainly boy of fourteen, he said: "You, Ngawang, you are the biggest bully in this lamasery; see if the son of a yak-driver is better than the son of a prince when it comes to fighting."

For the first time I was grateful to Tzu, the old police monk. In his younger days he had been a champion judo\* expert of Kham. He had taught me—as he said—"all he knew." I had had to fight with fully grown men, and in this science, where strength or age does not count, I had become very proficient indeed. Now that I knew that my future depended on the result of this fight, I was at last quite happy.

Nhawang was a strong and well-built boy, but very ungainly in his movements. I could see that he was used to rough-and-tumble fighting, where his strength was in his favour. He rushed at me, intending to grip me and make me helpless. I was not frightened now, thanks to Tzu and his, at times, brutal training. As Ngawang rushed, I moved aside and lightly twisted his arm. His feet skidded from under him, he turned a half-circle and landed on his head. For a moment he lay groaning, then sprang to his feet and leapt at me. I sank to the ground and twisted a leg as he passed over me. This time he spun around and landed on his left shoulder. Still he was not satisfied. He circled warily, then jumped aside and grasped a heavy incense burner which he swung at me by its chains. Such a weapon is slow, cumbersome, and very easy to avoid. I stepped beneath his flailing arms, and lightly stabbed a finger to the base of his neck, as Tzu had so often showed me. Down he went, like a rock on a mountainside, his nerveless fingers relinquishing their grip on the chains, and causing the censer to plummet like a slingshot at the group of watching boys and monks. Ngawang was unconscious for about half an hour. That special "touch" is often used to free the spirit from the body for astral traveling and similar purposes.

\*The Tibetan system is different and more advanced, but I shall call it "judo" in this book as the Tibetan name would convey nothing to Western readers.

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The Master of the Acolytes stepped forward to me, gave me a slap on the back which almost sent me flat on my face, and made the somewhat contradictory statement: "Boy, you are a man!"

My greatly daring reply was: "Then have I earned some food, sir, please? I have had very little of late."

"My boy, eat and drink your fill, then tell one of these hooligans—you are their master now—to show you to me."

The old monk who had brought me food before I entered the lamasery came and spoke to me: "My son, you have done well, Ngawang was the bully of the acolytes. Now you take his place and control with kindness and compassion. You have been taught well, see that your knowledge is used well, and does not fall into the wrong hands. Now come with me and I will get you food and drink."

The Master of the Acolytes greeted me amiably when I went to his room. "Sit, boy, sit. I am going to see if your educational prowess is as good as your physical. I am going to try to catch you, boy, so watch out!" He asked me an amazing number of questions, some oral, some written. For six hours we sat opposite each other on our cushions, then he expressed himself as satisfied. I felt like a badly tanned yak-hide, soggy and limp. He stood up. "Boy," he said, "follow me. I am going to take you to the Lord Abbot. An unusual honour, but you will learn why. Come."

Through the wide corridors I followed him, past the religious offices, past the inner temples, and the school rooms. Up the stairs, through more winding corridors, past the Halls of the Gods, and the storage places of herbs. Up more stairs, until, at last, we emerged on the flat roof and walked towards the Lord Abbot's house which was built upon it. Then through the gold-paneled doorway, past the golden Buddha, round by the Symbol of Medicine, and into the Lord Abbot's private room. "Bow, boy, bow, and do as I do. Lord, here is the boy Tuesday Lobsang Rampa."

With that, the Master of the Acolytes bowed three times, then prostrated himself upon the floor. I did the same, panting with eagerness to do the right thing in the right way. The impassive Lord Abbot looked at us and said: "Sit." We sat upon cushions, cross-legged, in the Tibetan way.

For a long time the Lord Abbot remained looking at me, but not speaking. Then he said: "Tuesday Lobsang Rampa, I know all about you, all that has been predicted. Your trial of endurance has been harsh but with good reason. That reason you will know in later years. Know now that of every thousand monks, only one is fitted for higher things, for higher development. The others drift, and do their daily task. They are the manual workers, those who turn the prayer-wheels without wondering why. We are not short of them, we are short of those who will carry on our knowledge when later our country is under an alien cloud. You will be specially trained, intensively trained, and in a few short years you will be given more knowledge than a lama normally acquires in a long lifetime. The Way will be hard, and often it will be painful. To force clairvoyance is painful, and to travel in the astral planes requires nerves that nothing can shatter, and a determi-

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nation as hard as the rocks.”

I listened hard, taking it all in. It all seemed too difficult to me. I was not that energetic! He went on: “You will be trained here in medicine and in astrology. You will be given every assistance which we can render. You will also be trained in the esoteric arts. Your Path is mapped for you, Tuesday Lobsang Rampa. Although you are but seven years of age, I speak to you as a man, for thus you have been brought up.” He inclined his head, and the Master of the Acolytes rose and bowed deeply. I did the same, and together we made our way out. Not until we were again in the Master’s room did he break the silence.

“Boy, you will have to work hard all the time. But we will help you all we can. Now I will have you taken to get your head shaved.” In Tibet, when a boy enters the priesthood, his head is shaved with the exception of one lock. This lock is removed when the boy is given the “priest-name”, and his former name is discarded, but more of that a little further on.

The Master of the Acolytes led me through winding ways to a small room, the “barber shop”. Here I was told to sit on the floor.

“Tam-cho,” the Master said, “shave this boy’s head. Remove the name lock as well, for he is being given his name immediately.”

Tam-cho stepped forward, grasped my pigtail in his right hand and lifted it straight up. “Ah! my boy. Lovely pigtail, well buttered, well cared for. A pleasure to saw it off.” From somewhere he produced a huge pair of shears—the sort our servants used for cutting plants. “Tishe,” he roared, “come and hold up this end of rope.” Tishe, the assistant, came running forward and held up my pigtail so tightly that I was almost lifted off the ground. With his tongue protruding, and with many little grunts, Tam-cho manipulated those deplorably blunt shears, until my pigtail was severed.

This was just the start. The assistant brought a bowl of hot water, so hot that I jumped off the floor in anguish when it was poured on my head. “What’s the matter, boy? Being boiled?” I replied that I was, and he said: “Never mind that, it makes the hair easier to remove!” He took up a three-sided razor, very like the thing we had at home for scraping floors. Eventually, after an eternity, it seemed to me, my head was denuded of hair.

“Come with me,” said the Master. He led me to his room and produced a big book. “Now, what are we to call you?” He went on mumbling to himself, then, “Ah! here we are; from now on you will be called Yza-mig-dmar Lah-lu.” For this book, however, I shall continue to use the name of Tuesday Lobsang Rampa, as it is easier for the reader.

Feeling as naked as a new-laid egg, I was taken to a class. Having had such a good education at home, I was considered to know more than the average, so was put in the class of the seventeen-year-old acolytes. I felt like a dwarf among giants. The others had seen how I had handled Ngawang, so I had no trouble except for the incident of one big, stupid boy. He came up behind me and put his dirty great hands on my very sore pate. It was just a matter of reaching up and jabbing my fingers into the ends of his elbows to send him away screaming with pain. Try knocking two “funny bones” at once, and see!



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Tzu really taught me well. The judo instructors whom I was to meet later in the week all knew Tzu; all said he was the finest “judo adept” in the whole of Tibet. I had no more trouble from boys. Our teacher, who had had his back turned when the boy put his hands on my head, had soon noticed what was happening. He laughed so much at the result that he let us go early.

It was now about eight-thirty in the evening, so we had about three-quarters of an hour to spare before temple service at nine-fifteen. My joy was short-lived; as we were leaving the room a lama beckoned to me. I went to him and he said: “Come with me.”

I followed him, wondering what fresh trouble was in store. He turned into a music room where there were about twenty boys whom I knew to be entrants like myself. Three musicians sat at their instruments, one at a drum, one had a conch, and the other a silver trumpet. The lama said: “We will sing so that I may test your voices for the choir,” The musicians started, playing a very well-known air which everyone could sing. We raised our voices.

The Music Master raised his eyebrows. The puzzled look on his face was replaced by one of real pain. Up went his two hands in protest. “Stop! Stop!” he shouted, “even the Gods must writhe at this. Now start again and do it properly.” We started again. Again we were stopped. This time the Music Master came straight to me.

“Dolt,” he exclaimed, “you are trying to make fun of me. We will have the musicians play, and you sing alone as you will not sing in company!” Once again the music started. Once again I raised my voice in song. But not for long. The Music Master waved to me in a frenzy. “Tuesday Lobsang, your talents do not include music. Never in my fifty-five years here have I heard such an off key voice. Off key? It is no key at all! Boy, you will not sing again. In the singing sessions you will study other things. In the temple services you will not sing, or your disharmony will ruin all. Now go, you unmusical vandal!” I went.

I idled around until I heard the trumpets announcing that it was time to assemble for the last service. Last night—good gracious—was it only last night that I had entered the lamasery? It seemed ages. I felt that I was walking in my sleep, and I was hungry again. Perhaps that was just as well, if I had been full I should have dropped off to sleep. Someone grabbed my robe, and I was swung up in the air. A huge, friendly looking lama had hoisted me up to his broad shoulder. “Come on, boy, you will be late for service, and then you’ll catch it. You miss your supper, you know, if you are late, and you feel as empty as a drum.” He entered the temple still carrying me and took his place just at the back of the boys’ cushions. Carefully he placed me on a cushion in front of him.

“Face me, boy, and make the same responses as I do, but when I sing, you—ha! ha!—keep quiet.” I was indeed grateful for his help, so few people had ever been kind to me; instruction I had had in the past had been yelled in one end, or knocked in the other. I must have dozed, because I came to with a start to find that the service had ended and the big lama had carried me, asleep, to the refractory and put tea, tsampa, and some boiled vegetables in front of me. “Eat it up, boy, then get off to bed. I’ll show you where to sleep. For this night you can sleep until five in the morning, then come to me.” That is the last thing I heard until at five in the morning I was awakened, with difficulty, by a boy

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who had been friendly the day before. I saw that I was in a large room, and was resting on three cushions. “The Lama Mingyar Dondup told me to see that you were awakened at five.” Up I got and piled my cushions against a wall as I saw the others had done. The others were moving out, and the boy with me said: “We must hurry for breakfast, then I have to take you to the Lama Mingyar Dondup.”

Now I was becoming more settled, not that I liked the place, or wanted to stay. But it did occur to me that as I had no choice whatever, I should be my own best friend if I settled without any fuss.

At breakfast, the Reader was droning out something from one of the hundred and twelve volumes of the Kan-gyur, the Buddhist Scriptures. He must have seen that I was thinking of something else, for he rapped out: “You, small new boy there, what did I say last? Quick”

Like a flash, and quite without thinking, I replied: “Sir, you said that boy is not listening, I’ll catch him”! That certainly raised a laugh and saved me from a hiding for inattention. The Reader smiled—a rare event—and explained that he had asked for the text from the Scriptures, but I could “get away with it this time”.

At all meals Readers stand at a lectern and read from sacred books. Monks are not allowed to talk at meals, nor to think of food. They must ingest sacred knowledge with their food. We all sat on the floor, on cushions, and ate from a table which was about eighteen inches high. We were not permitted to make any noise at meal times, and we were absolutely banned from resting our elbows on the table.

The discipline at Chakpori was indeed iron. Chakpori means “Iron Mountain”. In most lamaseries there was little organized discipline or routine. Monks could work or laze as they pleased. Perhaps one in a thousand wanted to make progress, and they were the ones who became lamas, for lama means “superior one” and is not applied to all and sundry. In our lamasery the discipline was strict, even fiercely so. We were going to be specialists, leaders of our class, and for us order and training was considered to be utterly essential. We boys were not allowed to use the normal white robes of an acolyte, but had to wear the russet of the accepted monk. We had domestic workers as well, but these monks were servant-monks who saw to the housekeeping side of the lamasery. We had to take turns at domestic work to make sure that we did not get exalted ideas. We always had to remember the old Buddhist saying: “Be yourself the example, do only good, and no harm, to others. This is the essence of Buddha’s teaching.” Our Lord Abbot, the Lama Cham-pa La, was as strict as my father, and demanded instant obedience. One of his sayings was: “Reading and writing are the gates of all qualities,” so we got plenty to do in that line.

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **LIFE AS A CHELA**

Our “day” started at midnight at Chakpori. As the midnight trumpet sounded, echoing through the dimly lit corridors, we would roll sleepily off our bed-cushions and fumble in the darkness for our robes. We all slept in the nude, the usual system in Tibet where there is no false modesty. With our robes on, off we would go, tucking our belongings into the pouched-up front of our dress.

Down the passageways we would clatter, not in a good mood at that hour. Part of our teaching was: “It is better to rest with a peaceful mind than to sit like Buddha and pray when angry.”

My irreverent thought often was: “Well, why can’t we rest with a peaceful mind? This midnight stunt makes me angry!” But no one gave me a satisfactory answer, and I had to go with the others into the Prayer Hall. Here the innumerable butter-lamps struggled to shed their rays of light through the drifting clouds of incense smoke. In the flickering light, with the shifting shadows, the giant sacred figures seemed to become alive, to bow and sway in response to our chants.

The hundreds of monks and boys would sit cross-legged on cushions on the floor. All would sit in rows the length of the hall. Each pair or rows would face each other so that the first and second rows would be face to face, the second and third would be back to back, and so on. We would have our chants and sacred songs which employ special tonal scales because in the East it is realized that sounds have power. Just as a musical note can shatter a glass, so can a combination of notes build up metaphysical power.

There would also be readings from the Kangyur. It was a most impressive sight to see these hundreds of men in blood-red robes and golden stoles, swaying and chanting in unison, with the silver tinkle of little bells, and the throbbing of drums. Blue clouds of incense smoke coiled and wreathed about the knees of the gods, and every so often it seemed, in the uncertain light, that one or other of the figures was gazing straight at us.

The service would last about an hour, then we would return to our sleeping-cushions

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until four in the morning. Another service would start at about four-fifteen. At five we would have our first meal, of tsampa and buttered tea. Even at this meal the Reader would be droning out his words and the Disciplinarian would be watchful at his side. At this meal any special orders or information would be given. It might be that something was wanted from Lhasa, and then at the breakfast meal the names of the monks would be called, those who were going to take or collect the goods. They would also be given special dispensation to be away from the lamasery for such and such a time, and to miss a certain number of services.

At six o'clock we would be assembled in our classrooms ready for the first session of our studies. The second of our Tibetan Laws was: "You shall perform religious observances, and study." In my seven-year-old ignorance I could not understand why we had to obey that Law, when the fifth Law, "You shall honour your elders, and those of high birth," was flaunted and broken. All my experience had led me to believe that there was something shameful in being of "high birth". Certainly I had been victimized for it.

It did not occur to me then that it is not the rank of birth that matters, but the character of the person concerned. We attended another service at nine in the morning, interrupting our studies for about forty minutes. Quite a welcome break, sometimes, but we had to be in class again by a quarter to ten. A different subject was started then, and we had to work at it until one o'clock. Still we were not free to eat; a half hour service came first and then we had our buttered tea and tsampa. One hour of manual labour followed, to give us exercise and to teach us humility. I seemed more often than not to collect the messiest of most unpleasant type of job.

Three o'clock saw us trooping off for an hour of enforced rest; we were not allowed to talk or move, but just had to lie still. This was not a popular time because the hour was too short for a sleep and too long to stay idle. We could think of much better things to do! At four, after this rest, we returned to our studies. This was the dread period of the day, five hours without a break, five hours when we could not leave the room for anything without incurring the severest penalties. Our teachers were quite free with their stout canes and some of them tackled the punishment of offenders with real enthusiasm. Only the badly pressed or most foolhardy pupils asked to "be excused" when punishment on one's return was inevitable.

Our release came at nine o'clock when we had the last meal of the day. Again this was buttered tea and tsampa. Sometimes—only sometimes—we had vegetables. Usually that meant sliced turnips, or some very small beans. They were raw, but to hungry boys they were very acceptable. On one unforgettable occasion, when I was eight, we had some pickled walnuts. I was particularly fond of them, having had them often at home. Now, foolishly, I tried to work an exchange with another boy: he to have my spare robe in exchange for his pickled walnuts. The Disciplinarian heard, and I was called to the middle of the hall and made to confess my sin.

As a punishment for "greediness" I had to remain without food or drink for twenty-four hours. My spare robe was taken from me as it was said that I had no use for it, "having been willing to barter it for that which was not essential".

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At nine-thirty we went to our sleeping-cushions, "bed" to us. No one was late for bed! I thought the long hours would kill me, I thought that I should drop dead at any moment, or that I would fall asleep and never again awaken. At first I, and the other new boys, used to hide in corners for a good doze. After quite a short time I became used to the long hours and took no notice at all of the length of the day.

It was just before six in the morning when, with the help of the boy who had awakened me, I found myself in front of the Lama Mingyar Dondup's door. Although I had not knocked, he called for me to enter. His room was a very pleasant one and there were wonderful wall paintings, some of them actually painted on the walls and others painted on silk and hanging. A few small statuettes were on low tables, they were of gods and goddesses and were made of jade, gold, and cloisonné. A large Wheel of Life also hung upon the wall. The lama was sitting in the lotus attitude on his cushion and before him, on a low table, he had a number of books, one of which he was studying as I entered.

"Sit here with me, Lobsang," he said, "we have a lot of things to discuss together, but first an important question to a growing man: have you had enough to eat and drink?" I assured him that I had. "The Lord Abbot has said that we can work together. We have traced your previous incarnation and it was a good one. Now we want to redevelop certain powers and abilities you then had. In the space of a very few years we want you to have more knowledge than a lama has in a very long life." He paused, and looked at me long and hard. His eyes were very piercing. "All men must be free to choose their own path," he continued, "your way will be hard for forty years, if you take the right path, but it will lead to great benefits in the next life. The wrong path now will give you comforts, softness, and riches in this life, but you will not develop. You and you alone can choose." He stopped, and looked at me.

"Sir," I replied, "my father told me that if I failed at the lamasery I was not to return home. How then would I have softness and comfort if I had no home to which to return? And who would show me the right path if I choose it?"

He smiled at me and answered: "Have you already forgotten? We have traced your previous incarnation. If you choose the wrong path, the path of softness, you will be installed in a lamasery as a Living Incarnation, and in a very few years will be an abbot in charge. Your father would not call that failure!"

Something in the way he spoke made me ask a further question: "Would you consider it a failure?"

"Yes," he replied, "knowing what I know, I would call it a failure."

"And who will show me the way?"

"I will be your guide if you take the right path, but you are the one to choose, no one can influence your decision."

I looked at him, stared at him. And liked what I saw. A big man, with keen black eyes. A broad open face, and a high forehead. Yes, I liked what I saw. Although only seven years of age, I had had a hard life, and met many people, and really could judge if a man



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was good.

“Sir,” I said, “I would like to be your pupil and take the right path.” I added somewhat ruefully, I suppose, “But I still don’t like hard work!”

He laughed, and his laugh was deep and warming. “Lobsang, Lobsang, none of us really like hard work, but few of us are truthful enough to admit it.” He looked through his papers. “We shall need to do a little operation to your head soon to force clairvoyance, and then we will speed your studies hypnotically. We are going to take you far in metaphysics, as well as in medicine!” I felt a bit gloomy, more hard work. It seemed to me that I had had to work hard all my seven years, and there seemed to be little play, or kite flying. The lama seemed to know my thoughts. “Oh yes, young man. There will be much kite flying later, the real thing: man-lifters. But first we must map out how best to arrange these studies.” He turned to his papers, and riffled through them. “Let me see, nine o’clock until one. Yes, that will do for a start. Come here every day at nine, instead of attending service, and we will see what interesting things we can discuss. Starting from tomorrow. Have you any message for your father and mother? I’m seeing them today. Giving them your pigtail!”

I was quite overcome. When a boy was accepted by a lamasery his pigtail was cut off and his head shaved, the pigtail would be sent to the parents, carried by a small acolyte, as a symbol that their son had been accepted. Now the Lama Mingyar Dondup was taking my pigtail to deliver in person. That meant that he had accepted me as his own personal charge, as his “spiritual son”. This lama was a very important man, a very clever man, one who had a most enviable reputation throughout Tibet. I knew that I could not fail under such a man.

That morning, back in the classroom, I was a most inattentive pupil. My thoughts were elsewhere, and the teacher had ample time and opportunity to satisfy his joy in punishing at least one small boy!

It all seemed very hard, the severity of the teachers. But then, I consoled myself, that is why I came, to learn. That is why I reincarnated, although then I did not remember what it was that I had to relearn. We firmly believe in reincarnation, in Tibet. We believe that when one reaches a certain advanced stage of evolution, one can choose to go on to another plane of existence, or return to earth to learn something more, or to help others. It may be that a wise man had a certain mission in life, but died before he could complete his work. In that case, so we believe, he can return to complete his task, providing that the result will be of benefit to others. Very few people could have their previous incarnations traced back, there had to be certain signs and the cost and time would prohibit it. Those who had those signs, as I had, were termed “Living Incarnations”. They were subjected to the sternest of stern treatment when they were young—as I had been—but became objects of reverence when they became older.

In my case I was going to have special treatment to “force-feed” my occult knowledge. Why, I did not know, then! A rain of blows on my shoulders brought me back to the reality of the classroom with a violent jerk. “Fool, dolt, imbecile! Have the mind demons penetrated your thick skull? It is more than I could do. You are fortunate that it is now

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time to attend service.” With that remark, the enraged teacher gave me a final hearty blow, for good measure, and stalked out of the room.

The boy next to me said, “Don’t forget, it’s our turn to work in the kitchens this afternoon. Hope we get a chance to fill our tsampa bags.”

Kitchen work was hard, the “regulars” there used to treat us boys as slaves. There was no hour of rest for us after kitchen hour. Two solid hours of hard labour, then straight to the classroom again. Sometimes we would be kept later in the kitchens, and so be late for class. A fuming teacher would be waiting for us, and would lay about him with his stick without giving us any opportunity of explaining the reason.

My first day of work in the kitchens was nearly my last. We trooped reluctantly along the stone-flagged corridors towards the kitchens. At the door we were met by an angry monk: “Come on, you lazy, useless rascals,” he shouted. “The first ten of you, get in there and stoke the fires.” I was the tenth. Down another flight of steps we went. The heat was overpowering. In front of us we saw a ruddy light, the light of roaring fires. Huge piles of yak-dung lay about, this was fuel for the furnaces. “Get those iron scoops and stoke for your lives,” the monk in charge yelled. I was just a poor seven-year-old among the others of my class, among whom was none younger than seventeen. I could scarcely lift the scoop, and in straining to put the fuel in the fire I tipped it over the monk’s feet. With a roar of rage he seized me by the throat, swung me round—and tripped. I was sent flying backwards. A terrible pain shot through me, and there was the sickening smell of burning flesh. I had fallen against the red-hot end of a bar protruding from the furnace. I fell with a scream to the floor, among the hot ashes.

At the top of my left leg, almost at the leg joint, the bar had burned its way in until stopped by the bone. I still have the dead-white scar, which even now causes me some trouble. By this scar I was in later years to be identified by the Japanese. There was uproar. Monks came rushing from everywhere. I was still among the hot ashes but was soon lifted out. Quite a lot of my body had superficial burns, but the leg burn really was serious.

Quickly I was carried upstairs to a lama. He was a medical lama, and applied himself to the task of saving my leg. The iron had been rusty, and when it entered my leg, flakes of rust had remained behind. He had to probe round and scoop out the pieces until the wound was clean. Then it was tightly packed with a powdered herb compress. The rest of my body was dabbed with a herbal lotion which certainly eased the pain of the fire. My leg was throbbing and throbbing and I was sure that I would never walk again. When he had finished, the lama called a monk to carry me to a small side-room, where I was put to bed on cushions. An old monk came in and sat on the floor beside me and started muttering prayers over me. I thought to myself that it was a fine thing to offer prayers for my safety after the accident had happened. I also decided to lead a good life, as I now had personal experience of what it felt like when the fire devils tormented one. I thought of a picture I had seen, in which a devil was prodding an unfortunate victim in much the same place as I had been burned.

It may be thought that monks were terrible people, not at all what one would expect.

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But — “monks”—what does it mean? We understand that word as anyone, male, living in the lamastic service. Not necessarily a religious person. In Tibet almost anyone can become a monk. Often a boy is “sent to be a monk” without having any choice at all in the matter. Or a man may decide that he had had enough of sheep herding, and wants to be sure of a roof over his head when the temperature is forty below zero.

He becomes a monk not through religious convictions, but for his own creature comfort. The lamaseries had “monks” as their domestic staff, as their builders, labourers, and scavengers. In other parts of the world they would be termed “servants” or the equivalent. Most of them had had a hard time; life at twelve to twenty thousand feet can be difficult, and often they were hard on us boys just for sheer want of thought or feeling. To us the term “monk” was synonymous with “man”. We named the members of the priesthood quite differently. A chela was a boy pupil, a novice, or acolyte. Nearest to what the average man means by “monk” is trappa. He is the most numerous of those in a lamasery. Then we come to that most abused term, a lama. If the trappas are the non-commissioned soldiers, then the lama is the commissioned officer. Judging by the way most people in the West talk and write, there are more officers than men! Lamas are masters, gurus, as we term them. The Lama Mingyar Dondup was going to be my guru, and I his chela. After the lamas there were the abbots. Not all of them were in charge of lamaseries, many were engaged in the general duties of senior administration, or traveling from lamasery to lamasery. In some instances, a particular lama could be of higher status than an abbot, it depended upon what he was doing.

Those who were “Living Incarnations,” such as I had been proved, could be made abbots at the age of fourteen; it depended upon whether they could pass the severe examinations. These groups were strict and stern, but they were not cruel; they were at all times just. A further example of “monks” can be seen in the term “police monks”. Their sole purpose was to keep order, they were not concerned with the temple ceremonial except that they had to be present to make sure that everything was orderly. The police monks often were cruel and, as stated, so were the domestic staff. One could not condemn a bishop because his under-gardener misbehaved! Nor expect the under-gardener to be a saint just because he worked for a bishop.

In the lamasery we had a prison. Not by any means a pleasant place to be in, but the characters of those who were consigned to it were not pleasant either. My solitary experience of it was when I had to treat a prisoner who had been taken ill. It was when I was almost ready to leave the lamasery that I was called to the prison cell. Out in the back courtyard were a number of circular parapets, about three feet high. The massive stones forming them were as wide as they were high. Covering the tops were stone bars each as thick as a man’s thigh. They covered a circular opening about nine feet across. Four police monks grasped the centre bar, and dragged it aside. One stooped and picked up a yak-hair rope, at the end of which there was a flimsy-looking loop. I looked on unhappily; trust myself to that?

“Now, Honourable Medical Lama,” said the man, “if you will step here and put your foot in this we will lower you.”

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Gloomily I complied. "You will want a light, sir," the police monk said, and passed me a flaring torch made of yarn soaked in butter. My gloom increased; I had to hold on to the rope, and hold the torch, and avoid setting myself on fire or burning through the thin little rope which so dubiously supported me. But down I went, twenty-five or thirty feet, down between walls glistening with water, down to the filthy stone floor.

By the light of the torch I saw an evil-looking wretch crouched against the wall. Just one look was enough, there was no aura around him, so no life. I said a prayer for the soul wandering between the planes of existence, and closed the wild, staring eyes, then called to be pulled up. My work was finished, now the body-breakers would take over. I asked what had been his crime, and was told that he had been a wandering beggar who had come to the lamasery for food and shelter, and then, in the night, killed a monk for his few possessions. He had been overtaken while escaping, and brought back to the scene of his crime. But all that is somewhat of a digression from the incident of my first attempt at kitchen work.

The effects of the cooling lotions were wearing off, and I felt as if the skin were being scorched off my body. The throbbing in my leg increased, it seemed as if it was going to explode; to my fevered imagination the hole was filled with a flaming torch. Time dragged; throughout the lamasery there were sounds, some that I knew, and many that I did not. The pain was sweeping up my body in great fiery gouts. I lay on my face, but the front of my body also was burned, burned by the hot ashes. There was a faint rustle, and someone sat beside me. A kind, compassionate voice, the voice of the Lama Mingyar Dondup said: "Little friend, it is too much. Sleep." Gentle fingers swept along my spine. Again, and again, and I knew no more.

A pale sun was shining in my eyes. I blinked awake, and with the first returning consciousness thought that someone was kicking me—that I had overslept. I tried to jump up, to attend service, but fell back in agony. My leg! A soothing voice spoke:

"Keep still, Lobsang, this is a day of rest for you." I turned my head stiffly, and saw with great astonishment that I was in the lama's room, and that he was sitting beside me. He saw my look and smiled. "And why the amazement? Is it not right that two friends should be together when one is sick?"

My somewhat faint reply was: "But you are a Head Lama, and I am just a boy."

"Lobsang, we have gone far together in other lives. In this, yet, you do not remember. I do, we were very close together in our last incarnations. But now you must rest and regain your strength. We are going to save your leg for you, so do not worry."

I thought of the Wheel of Existence, I thought of the injunction in our Buddhist Scriptures:

The prosperity of the generous man never fails, while the miser finds no comforter. Let the powerful man be generous to the suppliant. Let him look down the long path of lives. For riches revolve like the wheels of a cart, they come now to one, now to another. The beggar today is a prince tomorrow, and the prince may come as a beggar.

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It was obvious to me even then that the lama who was now my guide was indeed a good man, and one whom I would follow to the utmost of my ability. It was clear that he knew a very great deal about me, far more than I knew myself. I was looking forward to studying with him, and I resolved that no one should have a better pupil. There was, as I could plainly feel, a very strong affinity between us, and I marveled at the workings of Fate which had placed me in his care.

I turned my head to look out of the window. My bed-cushions had been placed on a table so that I could see out. It seemed very strange to be resting off the floor, some four feet in the air. My childish fancy likened it to a bird roosting in a tree! But there was much to see. Far away over the lower roofs beneath the window, I could see Lhasa sprawled in the sunlight. Little houses, dwarfed by the distance, and all of delicate pastel shades. The meandering waters of the Kyi River flowed through the level valley, flanked by the greenest of green grass. In the distance the mountains were purple, surmounted with white caps of shining snow. The nearer mountain-sides were speckled with golden-roofed lamaseries. To the left was the Potala with its immense bulk forming a small mountain. Slightly to the right of us was a small wood from which peeped temples and colleges. This was the home of the State Oracle of Tibet, an important gentleman whose sole task in life is to connect the material world with the immaterial. Below, in the forecourt, monks of all ranks were passing to and fro. Some wore a sombre brown robe, these were the worker monks. A small group of boys were wearing white, student monks from some more distant lamasery. Higher ranks were there, too: those in blood red, and those with purple robes. These latter often had golden stoles upon them, indicating that they were connected with the higher administration. A number were on horses or ponies. The laity rode coloured animals, while the priests used only white. But all this was taking me away from the immediate present. I was more concerned now about getting better and being able to move around again.

After three days it was thought better for me to get up and move around. My leg was very stiff and shockingly painful. The whole area was inflamed and there was much discharge caused by the particles of iron rust which had not been removed. As I could not walk unaided, a crutch was made, and I hopped about on this with some resemblance to a wounded bird. My body still had a large number of burns and blisters from the hot ashes, but the whole lot together was not as painful as my leg. Sitting was impossible, I had to lie on my right side or on my face. Obviously I could not attend services or the classrooms, so my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, taught me almost full time. He expressed himself as well satisfied with the amount I had learnt in my few years, and said, "But a lot of this you have unconsciously remembered from your last incarnation."



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## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **LIFE IN THE LAMASERY**

Two weeks went by and my body burns were very much better. My leg was still troublesome but at least it was making progress. I asked if I could resume normal routine as I wanted to be moving about more. It was agreed that I should, but I was given permission to sit in any way I could, or to lie on my face. Tibetans sit cross-legged in what we call the lotus attitude, but my leg disability definitely prevented that.

On the first afternoon of my return there was work in the kitchens. My job was to have a slate and keep check of the number of bags of barley being roasted. The barley was spread out on a stone floor which was smoking hot. Beneath was the furnace at which I had been burned. The barley was evenly distributed, and the door shut. While that lot was roasting we trooped along a corridor to a room where we cracked barley which had previously been roasted. There was a rough stone basin, cone-shaped and about eight feet across at the widest part. The internal surface was grooved and scored to hold grains of barley. A large stone, also cone-shaped, fitted loosely into the basin. It was supported by an age-worn beam which passed through it, and to which were fixed smaller beams like the spokes of a wheel without a rim. Roasted barley was poured into the basin, and monks and boys strained at the spokes to turn the stone, which weighed many tons. Once it started it was not so bad, then we all trooped around singing songs. I could sing here without reprimand! Starting the wretched stone was terrible. Everyone had to lend a hand to get it moving. Then, once moving, great care was taken to see that it did not stop.

Fresh supplies of roasted barley were poured in as the crushed grains dropped out of the bottom of the basin. All the cracked barley was taken away, spread on to hot stones, and roasted again. That was the basis of tsampa. Each of us boys carried a week's supply of tsampa on us or, more correctly, we carried the cracked and roasted barley on us. At mealtimes we poured a little of it from our leather bags into our bowls. Then we would add buttered tea, stir with our fingers until the mass was like dough, then we would eat it.

The next day we had to work helping to make tea. We went to another part of the

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kitchens where there was a cauldron holding a hundred and fifty gallons. This had been scoured out with sand and now gleamed like new metal. Earlier in the day it had been half filled with water, and this was now boiling and steaming. We had to fetch bricks of tea and crush them up. Each brick was about fourteen to sixteen pounds in weight and had been brought to Lhasa over the mountain passes from China and India. The crushed pieces were tossed into the boiling water. A monk would add a great block of salt, and another would put in an amount of soda. When everything was boiling again, shovelfuls of clarified butter would be added and the whole lot boiled for hours. This mixture had a very good food value and with the tsampa was quite sufficient to sustain life. At all times the tea was kept hot, and as one cauldron became used, another was filled and prepared. The worst part of preparing this tea was tending the fires. The yak-dung which we used instead of wood as fuel is dried into the form of slabs and there is an almost inexhaustible supply of it. When put on the fires it sends out clouds of evil-smelling, acrid smoke. Everything in range of the smoke would gradually become blackened, woodwork would eventually look like ebony, and faces exposed to it for long would become grimed by smoke-filled pores.

We had to help with all this menial work, not because there was a shortage of labour, but so that there should not be too much class distinction. We believe that the only enemy is the man you do not know; work alongside a man, talk to him, know him, and he ceases to be an enemy. In Tibet, on one day in every year, those in authority set aside their powers, and then any subordinate can say exactly what they think. If an abbot has been harsh during the year, he is told about it, and if the criticism is just, no action can be taken against the subordinate. It is a system that works well and is rarely abused. It provides a means of justice against the powerful, and gives the lower ranks a feeling that they have some say after all.

There was a lot to be studied in the classrooms. We sat in rows on the floor. When the teacher was lecturing to us, or writing on his wallboard, he stood in front of us. But when we were working at our lessons, he walked about at the back of us and we had to work hard all the time as we did not know which of us was being watched! He carried a very substantial stick and did not hesitate to use it on any part of us within immediate reach. Shoulders, arms, backs, or the more orthodox place—it did not matter at all to the teachers, one place was as good as another.

We studied a lot of mathematics, because that was a subject which was essential for astrological work. Our astrology was no mere hit-or-miss affair, but was worked out according to scientific principles. I had a lot of astrology drummed into me because it was necessary to use it in medical work. It is better to treat a person according to their astrological type than to prescribe something quite haphazardly in the hope that as it once cured a person, it may again. There were large wall charts dealing with astrology, and others showing pictures of various herbs. These latter were changed every week and we were expected to be entirely familiar with the appearance of all the plants. Later we would be taken on excursions to gather and prepare these herbs, but we were not allowed to go on these until we had a far better knowledge and could be trusted to pick the right varieties. These “herb-gathering” expeditions, which were in the fall of the year,

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were a very popular relaxation from the strict routine of the lamastic life. Sometimes such a visit would last for three months, and would take one to the highlands, an area of icebound land, twenty to twenty-five thousand feet above the sea, where the vast ice sheets were interrupted by green valleys heated by hot springs. Here one could have an experience matched perhaps nowhere else in the world.

In moving fifty yards one could range from a temperature of forty below zero to a hundred or more, Fahrenheit, above. This area was quite unexplored except by a few of us monks. Our religious instruction was quite intensive; every morning we had to recite the Laws and Steps of the Middle Way. These Laws were :

1. Have faith in the leaders of the lamasery and country.
2. Perform religious observances, and study hard.
3. Pay honour to the parents.
4. Respect the virtuous.
5. Honour elders and those of high birth.
6. Help one's country.
7. Be honest and truthful in all things.
8. Pay heed to friends and relatives.
9. Make the best use of food and wealth.
10. Follow the example of those who are good.
11. Show gratitude and return kindness.
12. Give fair measure in all things.
13. Be free from jealousy and envy.
14. Refrain from scandal.
15. Be gentle in speech and in action and harm none.
16. Bear suffering and distress with patience and meekness.

We were constantly told that if everyone obeyed those Laws, there would be no strife or disharmony. Our lamasery was noted for its austerity and rigorous training. Quite a number of monks came from other lamaseries and then left in search of softer conditions. We looked upon them as failures and upon ourselves as of the elite. Many other lamaseries had no night services; the monks went to bed at dark and stayed there until dawn. To us they seemed soft and effete, and although we grumbled to ourselves, we would have grumbled still more if our schedule had been altered to bring us to the inefficient level of the others. The first year was particularly hard. Then was the time to weed out those who were failures. Only the strongest could survive on visits to the frozen highlands in search of herbs, and we of Chakpori were the only men to go there. Wisely our leaders decided to eliminate the unsuitable before they could in any way endanger oth-

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ers. During the first year we had almost no relaxation, no amusements and games.

Study and work occupied every waking moment. One of the things for which I am still grateful is the way in which we were taught to memorize. Most Tibetans have good memories, but we who were training to be medical monks had to know the names and exact descriptions of a very large number of herbs, as well as knowing how they could be combined and used.

We had to know much about astrology, and be able to recite the whole of our sacred books. A method of memory training had been evolved throughout the centuries. We imagined that we were in a room lined with thousands and thousands of drawers. Each drawer was clearly labeled, and the writing on all the labels could be read with ease from where we stood. Every fact we were told had to be classified, and we were instructed to imagine that we opened the appropriate drawer and put the fact inside. We had to visualize it very clearly as we did it, visualize the “fact” and the exact location of the “drawer”. With little practice it was amazingly easy to—in imagination—enter the room, open the correct drawer, and extract the fact required as well as all related facts.

Our teachers went to great pains to ram home the need for good memories. They would shoot questions at us merely to test our memories. The questions would be quite unrelated to each other so that we could not follow a trend and take an easy path. Often it would be questions on obscure pages of the sacred books interspersed with queries about herbs. The punishment for forgetfulness was most severe; forgetting was the unforgivable crime and was punished with a severe beating. We were not given a long time in which to try to remember. The teacher would perhaps say: “You, boy, I want to know the fifth line of the eighteenth page of the seventh volume of the Kan-gyur, open the drawer, now, what is it?” Unless one could answer within about ten seconds it was as well not to answer, because the punishment would be even worse if there was any mistake, no matter how slight. It is a good system, though, and does train the memory. We could not carry books of facts. Our books were usually about three feet wide by about eighteen inches long, loose sheets of paper held unbound between wooden covers. Certainly I found a good memory to be of the utmost value in later years.

During the first twelve months we were not allowed out of the lamasery grounds. Those who did leave were not permitted to return. This was a rule peculiar to Chakpori, because the discipline was so strict it was feared that if we were allowed out we should not return. I admit that I should have “run for it” if I had had anywhere to run. After the first year we were used to it.

The first year we were not permitted to play any games at all, we were kept hard at work the whole time and this most effectively weeded out those who were weak and unable to stand the strain. After these first hard months we found that we had almost forgotten how to play. Our sports and exercises were designed to toughen us and be of some practical use in later life. I retained my earlier fondness for stilt walking, and now I was able to devote some time to it. We started with stilts which lifted our feet our own height above ground. As we became more adept we used longer stilts, usually about ten feet high. On those we strutted about the courtyards, peering into windows and gener-

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ally making a nuisance of ourselves. No balancing pole was used; when we desired to stay in one place we rocked from foot to foot as if we were marking time. That enabled us to maintain our balance and position.

There was no risk of falling off if one was reasonably alert. We fought battles on stilts. Two teams of us, usually ten a side, would line up about thirty yards apart, and then on a given signal we would charge each other, uttering wild whoops calculated to frighten off the sky demons. As I have said, I was in a class of boys much older and bigger than myself. This gave me an advantage when it came to stilt fights. The others lumbered along heavily, and I could nip in among them and pull a stilt here and push one there and so send the riders toppling. On horseback I was not so good, but when I had to stand or fall on my own resources, I could make my way.

Another use for stilts, for us boys, was when we crossed streams. We could wade carefully across and save a long detour to the nearest ford. I remember once I was ambling along on six-foot stilts. A stream was in the way and I wanted to cross. The water was deep right from the banks, there was no shallow part at all. I sat on the bank and lowered my stilted legs in. The water came to my knees, as I walked out in midstream it rose to nearly my waist. Just then I heard running footsteps. A man hurried along the path and gave the merest glance at the small boy crossing the water. Apparently, seeing that the stream did not reach my waist, he thought: "Ah! Here is a shallow spot." There was a sudden splash, and the man disappeared completely. Then there was a flurry of water, and the man's head came above the surface, his clutching hands reached the bank, and he hauled himself to the land. His language was truly horrible, and the threats of what he was going to do to me almost curdled my blood. I hurried off to the far bank and when I, too, reached shore, I think that never before had I traveled so fast on stilts.

One danger of stilts was the wind which always seems to be blowing in Tibet. We would be playing in a courtyard, on stilts, and in the excitement of the game we would forget the wind and stride out beyond the sheltering wall. A gust of wind would billow out our robes and over we would go, a tangle of arms, legs and stilts. There were very few casualties. Our studies in judo taught us how to fall without harming ourselves. Often we would have bruises and scraped knees, but we ignored those trifles. Of course there were some who could almost trip over their shadow, some clumsy boys never learn breakfalls and they at times sustained a broken leg or arm.

There was one boy who would walk along on his stilts and then turn a somersault between the shafts. He seemed to hold on the end of the stilts, take his feet from the steps, and twist himself round in a complete circle. Up his feet would go, straight over his head, and down to find the steps every time. He did it time after time, almost never missing a step, or breaking the rhythm of his walk. I could jump on stilts, but the first time I did so I landed heavily, the two steps sheared right off and I made a hasty descent.

After that I made sure that the stilt steps were well fastened. Just before my eighth birthday, the Lama Mingyar Dondup told me that the astrologers had predicted that the day following my birthday would be a good time to "open the Third Eye". This did not upset me at all, I knew that he would be there, and I had complete trust in him. As he had



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so often told me, with the Third Eye open, I should be able to see people as they were. To us the body was a mere shell activated by the greater self, the Overself that takes over when one is asleep, or leaves this life. We believe that Man is placed in the infirm physical body so that he can learn lessons and progress. During sleep Man returns to a different plane of existence. He lays down to rest, and the spirit disengages itself from the physical body and floats off when sleep comes.

The spirit is kept in contact with the physical body by a "silver cord" which is there until the moment of death. The dreams which one has are experiences undergone in the spirit plane of sleep. When the spirit returns to the body, the shock of awaking distorts the dream memory, unless one has had special training, and so the "dream" may appear wildly improbable to one in the waking state. But this will be mentioned rather more fully later when I state my own experiences in this connection.

The aura which surrounds the body, and which anyone can be taught to see under suitable conditions, is merely a reflection of the Life Force burning within. We believe that this force is electric, the same as Lightning. Now, in the West, scientists can measure and record the "electric brain waves". People who scoff at such things should remember this and remember, too, the corona of the sun. Here flames protrude millions of miles from the sun's disc. The average person cannot see this corona, but in times of total eclipse it is visible to anyone who cares to look. It really does not matter whether people believe it or not. Disbelief will not extinguish the sun's corona. It is still there. So is the human aura. It was this aura, among other things, which I was going to be able to see when the Third Eye was opened.

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## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **THE OPENING OF THE THIRD EYE**

My birthday came, and during that day I was at liberty, free from lessons, free from services. The Lama Mingyar Dondup said, in the early morning, "Have an amusing day, Lobsang, we are coming to see you at dusk." It was very pleasant lying on my back, lazing, in the sunlight. Slightly below me I could see the Potala with its roofs agleam. Behind me the blue waters of the Norbu Linga, or Jewel Park, made me wish that I could take a skin boat and drift along. South, I could watch a group of traders crossing the Kyi Chu ferry. The day passed too quickly.

With the death of the day the evening was born, and I went to the little room where I was to stay. There came the murmur of soft felt boots on the stone floor outside, and into the room came three lamas of high degree. They put a herbal compress to my head and bound it tightly in place. In the evening the three came again, and one was the Lama Mingyar Dondup. Carefully the compress was removed, and my forehead wiped clean and dry. A strong-looking lama sat behind me and took my head between his knees. The second lama opened a box and removed an instrument made of shining steel. It resembled a bradawl except that instead of having a round shaft this one was "U" shaped, and in place of a point there were little teeth around the edge of the "U". For some moments the lama looked at the instrument, and then passed it through the flame of a lamp to sterilize it.

The Lama Mingyar Dondup took my hands and said, "This is quite painful, Lobsang, and it can only be done while you are fully conscious. It will not take very long, so try to keep as still as you can."

I could see various instruments laid out, and a collection of herbal lotions, and I thought to myself: "Well, Lobsang, my boy, they will finish you one way or the other and there is nothing you can do about it—except keep quiet!"

The lama with the instrument looked round to the others, and said: "All ready? Let us start now, the sun has just set." He pressed the instrument to the centre of my forehead and rotated the handle. For a moment there was a sensation as if someone was pricking

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me with thorns. To me it seemed that time stood still. There was no particular pain as it penetrated the skin and flesh, but there was a little jolt as the end hit the bone. He applied more pressure, rocking the instrument slightly so that the little teeth would fret through the frontal bone. The pain was not sharp at all, just a pressure and a dull ache. I did not move with the Lama Mingyar Dondup looking on; I would rather have died than make a move or outcry. He had faith in me, as I in him, and I knew that what he did or said was right. He was watching most closely, with a little pucker of muscles in tension at the corners of his mouth. Suddenly there was a little “scrunch” and the instrument penetrated the bone. Instantly its motion was arrested by the very alert operator.

He held the handle of the instrument firmly while the Lama Mingyar Dondup passed him a very hard, very clean sliver of wood which had been treated by fire and herbs to make it as hard as steel. This sliver was inserted in the “U” of the instrument and slid down so that it just entered the hole in my head. The lama operating moved slightly to one side so that the Lama Mingyar Dondup could also stand in front of me. Then, at a nod from the latter, the operator, with infinite caution, slid the sliver farther and farther. Suddenly I felt a stinging, tickling sensation apparently in the bridge of my nose. It subsided, and I became aware of subtle scents which I could not identify. That, too, passed away and was replaced by a feeling as if I was pushing, or being pushed, against a resilient veil. Suddenly there was a blinding flash, and at that instant the Lama Mingyar Dondup said “Stop” For a moment the pain was intense, like a searing white flame. It diminished, died and was replaced by spirals of colour, and globules of incandescent smoke. The metal instrument was carefully removed. The sliver of wood remained, it would stay in place for two or three weeks and until it was removed I would have to stay in this little room almost in darkness. No one would see me except these three lamas, who would continue my instruction day by day.

Until the sliver was removed I would have only the barest necessities to eat and drink. As the projecting sliver was being bound in place so that it could not move, the Lama Mingyar Dondup turned to me and said: “You are now one of us, Lobsang. For the rest of your life you will see people as they are and not as they pretend to be.” It was a very strange experience to see these men apparently enveloped in golden flame. Not until later did I realize that their auras were golden because of the pure life they led, and that most people would look very different indeed.

As my new-found sense developed under the skillful ministrations of the lamas I was able to observe that there were other emanations extending beyond the innermost aura. In time I was able to determine the state of a person’s health by the colour and intensity of the aura. I was also able to know when they were speaking the truth, or otherwise, by the way the colours fluctuated. But it was not only the human body which was the subject of my clairvoyance. I was given a crystal, which I still have, and in its use I had much practice. There is nothing at all magical in crystals. They are merely instruments. Just as a microscope, or telescope, can bring normally invisible objects into view by using natural laws, so can a gazing-crystal. It merely serves as a focus for the Third Eye, with which one can penetrate any person’s subconscious and retain the memory of facts gleaned. The crystal must be suited to the individual user. Some persons work best with a rock

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crystal, others prefer a ball of glass. Yet others use a bowl of water or a pure black disc. No matter what they use, the principles involved are the same.

For the first week the room was kept in almost complete darkness. The following week just a glimmer of light was admitted, the amount increasing as the end of the week drew close. On the seventeenth day the room was in full light, and the three lamas came together to remove the sliver. It was very simple. The night before my forehead had been painted with a herbal lotion. In the morning the lamas came and, as before, one took my head between his knees. The operator took hold of the projecting end of the wood with an instrument. There was a sudden sharp jerk—and that is all there was to it. The sliver was out. The Lama Mingyar Dondup put a pad of herbs over the very small spot left, and showed me the sliver of wood. It had turned as black as ebony while in my head. The operator lama turned to a little brazier and placed the wood upon it together with some incense of various kinds. As the combined smoke wafted to the ceiling, so was the first stage of my initiation completed. That night I fell asleep with my head in a whirl; what would Tzu look like now that I saw differently? Father, mother, how would they appear? But there was no answer to such questions yet.

In the morning the lamas came again and examined me carefully. They said that I could now go out with the others, but told me that half my time would be spent with the Lama Mingyar Dondup, who would teach me by intensive methods. The other half of my time would be spent attending classes and services, not so much for the educational side, but to give me a balanced outlook by mixing. A little later I would be taught by hypnotic methods as well. For the moment I was mainly interested in food. For the past eighteen days I had been kept on a very small allowance, now I intended to make up for it. Out of the door I hurried, intent only on that thought. Approaching me was a figure smothered in blue smoke, shot through with flecks of angry red. I uttered a squeak of alarm and dashed back into the room. The others looked up at my horrified expression.

“There’s a man on fire in the corridor,” I said.

The Lama Mingyar Dondup hurried out and came back smiling. “Lobsang, that is a cleaner in a temper. His aura is smoky-blue as he is not evolved, and the flecks of red are the temper impulses showing. Now you can again go in search of that food you want so much.”

It was fascinating meeting the boys I knew so well, yet had not known at all. Now I could look at them and get the impression of their true thoughts, the genuine liking for me, the jealousy from some, and the indifference from others. It was not just a matter of seeing colours and knowing all; I had to be trained to understand what those colours meant. My Guide and I sat in a secluded alcove where we could watch those who entered the main gates. The Lama Mingyar Dondup would say: “The one coming, Lobsang, do you see that thread of colour vibrating above his heart? That shade and vibration indicates that he has a pulmonary disease”, or, perhaps at an approaching trader: “Look at this one, look at those shifting bands, those intermittent flecks. Our Brother of Business is thinking that he may be able to delude the stupid monks, Lobsang, he is remembering that he did so once before. To what petty meannesses men will stoop for money!” As an

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aged monk approached, the Lama said: “Watch this one carefully, Lobsang. Here is a truly holy man, but one who believes in the literal word-for-word accuracy of our Scriptures. You observe those discolorations in the yellow of the nimbus? It indicates that he has not yet evolved far enough to reason for himself.” So it went on, day after day. Particularly with the sick we used the power of the Third Eye, for those who were sick in the flesh or sick in the spirit. One evening the Lama said: “Later we shall show you how to shut the Third Eye at will, for you will not want to watch people’s failings all the time, it would be an intolerable burden. For the moment use it all the time, as you do your physical eyes. Then we will train you to shut it and open it at will as you can the other eyes.”

Many years ago, according to our legends, all men and women could use the Third Eye. In those days the gods walked upon the earth and mixed with men, Mankind had visions of replacing the gods and tried to kill them, forgetting that what Man could see the gods could see better. As a punishment, the Third Eye of Man was closed. Throughout the ages a few people have been born with the ability to see clairvoyantly; those who have it naturally can have its power increased a thousandfold by appropriate treatment, as I had. As a special talent it had to be treated with care and respect. The Lord Abbot sent for me one day and said: “My son, you now have this ability, an ability denied to most. Use it only for good, never for self gain. As you wander in other countries you will meet those who would have you behave as a conjurer in a fair. ‘Prove us this, prove us that’, they will say. But I say, my son, that this must not be. The talent is to enable you to help others, not to enrich self. Whatever you see by clairvoyance—and you will see much!—do not disclose it if it will harm others or affect their Path through Life. For Man must choose his own Path, my son, tell him what you will, he will still go his own way. Help in sickness, in suffering, yes, but do not say that which may alter a man’s Path.”

The Lord Abbot was a very learned man and was the physician who attended the Dalai Lama. Before concluding that interview he told me that within a few days I was going to be sent for by the Dalai Lama who wanted to see me. I was going to be a visitor at the Potala for a few weeks with the Lama Mingyar Dondup.



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## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **THE POTALA**

One Monday morning the Lama Mingyar Dondup told me that the date for our visit to the Potala had been fixed. It was to be at the end of the week. "We must rehearse, Lobsang, we must make ourselves quite perfect in our approach." I was going to be presented to the Dalai Lama, and my "approach" had to be exactly right. In a little disused temple near our schoolroom there was a life-sized statue of the Dalai Lama. We went there and pretended that we were in audience at the Potala. "You see how I do it first, Lobsang. Enter the room like this, with your eyes down. Walk to here, about five feet from the Dalai Lama. Put out your tongue in salute and sink to your knees. Now watch carefully; put your arms like this and bow forward. Once, once more, and then a third time. Kneel, with your head bowed, then place the silk scarf across His feet, like this. Regain your position, with head bowed, so that He can put a scarf across your neck. Count ten to yourself, so as not to show undue haste, then rise and walk backwards to the nearest unoccupied cushion." I had followed all that as the Lama demonstrated it with the ease of long practice. He continued: "Just a warning here, before you start to walk backwards, take a quick, unobtrusive glance at the position of the nearest cushion. We don't want you to catch the cushion with your heels and have to practice a breakfall to save the back of your head. It is quite easy to trip in the excitement of the moment. Now you show me that you can do as well as I."

I went out of the room, and the Lama clapped his hands as a signal for me to enter. In I hurried, only to be stopped with : "Lobsang! Lobsang! Are you in for a race? Now do it more slowly; time your steps by saying to yourself, Om-ma-ni-pad-me-Hum! Then you will come in as a dignified young priest instead of a galloping racehorse on the Tsang-po plain."

Out I went once more, and this time I entered most sedately and made my way to the statue. On my knees I went, with my tongue protruding in Tibetan salute. My three bows must have been models of perfection; I was proud of them. But, goodness me! I'd forgotten the scarf! So out I went once more to start all over again. This time I did it correctly, and placed the ceremonial scarf at the foot of the statue: I walked backwards, and man-

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aged to sit in the lotus fashion without tripping.

“Now we come to the next stage. You will have to conceal your wooden drinking-cup in your left sleeve. You will be given tea when you are seated. The cup is held like this, wedged against the sleeve and forearm. If you are reasonably careful it will stay in place. Let us practice with the cup up the sleeve, and remembering the scarf.” Every morning of that week we rehearsed so that I could do it automatically. At first the cup would fall out and clatter across the floor when I bowed, but I soon mastered the knack of it.

On the Friday I had to go before the Lord Abbot and show him that I was proficient. He said that my performance was “a worthy tribute to the training of our Brother Mingyar Dondup”.

The next morning, Saturday, we walked down our hill to go across to the Potala. Our Lamasery was a part of the Potala organization although it was on a separate hill close to the main buildings. Ours was known as the Temple of Medicine, and the Medical School. Our Lord Abbot was the sole physician to the Dalai Lama, a position not altogether to be envied, because his job was not to cure an illness but to keep the patient well. Any aches or disorders were thus considered to be due to some failure on the part of the physician. Yet the Lord Abbot could not go and examine the Dalai Lama whenever he wished, but had to wait until he was sent for, when the patient was ill!

But on this Saturday I was not thinking of the worries of the physician, I had enough of my own. At the foot of our hill we turned towards the Potala and made our way through the crowds of avid sightseers and pilgrims. These people had come from all parts of Tibet to see the home of the Inmost One, as we call the Dalai Lama: If they could catch a glimpse of him they would go away feeling more than repaid for the long journeys and hardships. Some of the pilgrims had traveled for months on foot to make this one visit to the Holy of Holies. Here there were farmers, nobles from distant provinces, herdsmen, traders, and the sick who hoped to obtain a cure in Lhasa. All thronged the road and made the six-mile circuit around the foot of the Po-tala. Some went on hands and knees, others stretched their length on the ground, arose, and stretched again. Yet others, the sick and infirm, hobbled along supported by friends, or with the aid of two sticks. Everywhere there were the vendors. Some were selling hot buttered tea heated over a swinging brazier. Others were selling foods of various kinds. There were charms for sale and amulets “blessed by a Holy Incarnation.” Old men were there selling printed horoscopes to the gullible. Farther down the road a group of cheerful men were trying to sell hand prayer-wheels as a souvenir of the Potala.

Scribes were there, too: for a certain sum they would write a note certifying that the person paying them had visited Lhasa and all the holy places there. We had no time for any of these, our objective was the Potala.

The private residence of the Dalai Lama was at the very top of the building, for no one may live higher. An immense stone staircase goes all the way up to the top, running outside the buildings. It is more like a street of stairs than a mere staircase. Many of the higher officials ride their horses up to save them from walking. We met many such during our ascent. At one point, high up, the Lama Mingyar Dondup stopped and pointed:

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"There is your former home, Lobsang, the servants are very active in the courtyard." I looked, and perhaps it would be better to leave unsaid what I felt. Mother was just riding out with her retinue of servants. Tzu was there as well. No, my thoughts at that time must remain mine.

The Potala is a self-contained township on a small mountain. Here are conducted all the ecclesiastical and secular affairs of Tibet. This building, or group of buildings, is the living heart of the country, the focus of all thoughts, of all hopes. Within these walls are treasure-houses containing blocks of gold, sacks and sacks of gems, and curiosities from the earliest ages. The present buildings are only about three hundred and fifty years old, but they are built on the foundations of a former palace. Long before that there was an armored fort on the top of the mountain. Deep down inside the mountain, for it is of volcanic origin, there is a huge cave, with passages radiating from it, and at the end of one a lake. Only a few, the very privileged few, have been here, or even know about it.

But outside, in the morning sunlight, we were making our way up the steps. Everywhere we heard the clacking of prayer-wheels, the only form of wheel in Tibet because of the old prediction which says that when wheels come into the country, peace will go out. Eventually we reached the top where the giant guards swung open the gold gate as they saw the Lama Mingyar Dondup, whom they knew well. We went on until we reached the very top of the roof where were the tombs of former Incarnations of the Dalai Lama, and his present private residence. A large curtain of yaks' wool, coloured maroon, covered the entrance. It was pulled aside at our approach and we entered a large hall which was guarded by green porcelain dragons. Many rich tapestries hung from the walls, depicting religious scenes and ancient legends. On low tables there were articles to delight a collector's heart, statuettes of various gods and goddesses of mythology, and cloisonné ornaments. By a curtain doorway, on a shelf, rested the Book of Nobles, and I wished that I could open it and see our name inside, to reassure me, for on this day, in this place, I felt very small and insignificant. At eight years of age I had no illusions left, and I wondered why the Highest in the Land wanted to see me. I knew that it was highly unusual and it was my opinion that there was more hard work behind it all, hard work or hardship.

A lama robed in cherry-red, with a gold stole around his neck was talking with the Lama Mingyar Dondup. The latter seemed to be very well known indeed here, and everywhere I had been with him. I heard: "His Holiness is interested, and wants a private talk with him, alone."

My Guide turned to me and said: "It is time for you to go in, Lobsang. I will show you the door, then enter alone and pretend that it is just practice again, as we have been doing all this week." He put an arm round my shoulders and led me to a door, whispering, "There is no need at all for you to worry—in you go." With a little push at my back to urge me in he stood and watched. I entered the door, and there, at the far end of a long room, was the Inmost One, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.

He was sitting on a silken cushion of saffron colour. His dress was that of an ordinary lama, but on his head he wore a tall yellow hat which had flaps reaching to his shoulders.

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He was just putting down a book. Bowing my head I walked across the floor until I was about five feet away, then I sank to my knees and bowed three times. The Lama Mingyar Dondup had passed me the silk scarf just before I entered, now I placed it at the feet of the Inmost One. He bent forward and put his across my wrists instead of, as was usual, around the neck. I felt dismayed now, I had to walk backwards to the nearest cushion, and I had observed that they were all quite a distance away, near the walls. The Dalai Lama spoke for the first time: "Those cushions are too far away for you to walk backwards, turn around and bring one here so that we can talk together." I did so, and returned with a cushion. He said, "Put it here, in front of me, and sit down." When I was seated, he said, "Now, young man, I have heard some remarkable things about you. You are clairvoyant in your own right, and you have had the power further increased by the Opening of the Third Eye. I have the records of your last incarnation. I have also the astrologers' predictions. You will have a hard time at the start, but will attain success in the end. You will go to many foreign countries the world over, countries of which you have not yet heard. You will see death and destruction and cruelty such as you cannot imagine. The way will be long and hard, but success will come as predicted."

I did not know why he was telling me all this; I knew it all, every word of it, and had done since I was seven years of age. I knew well that I would learn medicine and surgery in Tibet and then go to China and learn the same subjects all over again. But the Inmost One was still speaking, warning me not to give proof of any unusual powers, not to talk of the ego, or soul, when I was in the western world. "I have been to India and China," he said, "and in those countries one can discuss the Greater Realities, but I have met many from the West. Their values are not as ours, they worship commerce and gold. Their scientists say: 'Show us the soul. Produce it, let us grasp it, weigh it, test it with acids. Tell us its molecular structure, its chemical reactions. Proof, proof, we must have proof.' They will tell you, uncaring that their negative attitude of suspicion kills any chance of their obtaining that proof. But we must have tea."

He lightly struck a gong, and gave an order to the lama who answered it. Shortly the latter returned bringing tea and special foods which had been imported from India. As we ate the Inmost One talked, telling me of India and China. He told me that he wanted me to study really hard, and that he would pick special teachers for me. I simply could not contain myself; I blurted out: "Oh, no one can know more than my Master, the Lama Mingyar Dondup!" The Dalai Lama looked at me, then put his head back and roared with laughter. Probably no other person had spoken to him like that, certainly no other eight-year-old boy had. He seemed to appreciate it.

"So you think Mingyar Dondup is good, do you? Tell me what you really think of him, you young gamecock!"

"Sir!" I replied, "you have told me that I have exceptional powers of clairvoyance. The Lama Mingyar Dondup is the best person I have ever seen."

The Dalai Lama laughed again and struck the gong at his side. "Ask Mingyar to come in," he said to the lama who answered his summons.

The Lama Mingyar Dondup entered, and made his bows to the Inmost One. "Bring a

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cushion and sit down, Mingyar,” said the Dalai Lama. “You have had your character told by this young man of yours; it is an assessment with which I entirely agree.” The Lama Mingyar Dondup sat down beside me, and the Dalai Lama continued, “You have accepted full responsibility for Lobsang Rampa’s training. Plan it as you will, and call upon me for any letters of authority. I will see him from time to time.” Turning to me, he said, “Young man, you have chosen well, your Guide is an old friend of my former days, and is a true Master of the Occult.”

There were a few more words, and then we rose, bowed, and left the room. I could see that the Lama Mingyar Dondup was secretly very pleased with me, or with the impression I had made. “We will stay here a few days and explore some of the lesser-known parts of the buildings,” he said. “Some of the lower corridors and rooms have not been opened during the past two hundred years. You will learn much Tibetan history from these rooms.”

One of the attendant lamas—there were none below that rank in the Dalai Lama’s residence—approached and said that we should have a room each here at the top of the building. He showed us to the rooms, and I was quite thrilled at the view, right across Lhasa, right across the plain. The lama said, “His Holiness has given instruction that you come and go as you please and that no door be closed against you.”

The Lama Mingyar Dondup told me that I should lie down for a time. The scar on my left leg was still causing much trouble. It was painful, and I walked with a limp. At one time it was feared that I would be a permanent cripple. For an hour I rested, then my Guide came in bearing tea and food. “Time to fill out some of those hollows, Lobsang. They eat well in this place, so let us make the most of it.” I needed no further encouragement to eat. When we had finished, the Lama Mingyar Dondup led the way out of the room, and we went into another room at the far side of the flat roof. Here, to my profound amazement, the windows had no oiled cloth, but were filled with nothingness which was just visible.

I put out my hand and very cautiously touched the visible nothingness. To my astonishment it was cold, as cold as ice almost, and slippery. Then it dawned upon me: glass! I had never seen the stuff in a sheet before. We had used powdered glass on our kite strings, but that glass had been thick and one could not see clearly through it. It had been coloured, but this, this was like water. But that was not all. The Lama Mingyar Dondup swung open the window, and picked up a brass tube which seemed to be part of a trumpet covered in leather. He took the tube and pulled, and four pieces appeared, each from inside the other. He laughed at the expression on my face, and then poked one end of the tube out of the window and brought the other end close to his face. Ah! I thought, he is going to play an instrument. But the end did not go to his mouth, but to one eye. He fiddled about with the tube, and then said: “Look through here, Lobsang. Look with your right eye and keep the left closed.”

I looked, and nearly fainted with stupefaction. A man on a horse was riding up the tube towards me. I jumped aside, and looked around. There was no one in the room except the Lama Mingyar Dondup, and he was shaking with laughter. I looked at him



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suspiciously, thinking that he had bewitched me. "His Holiness said you were a Master of the Occult," I said, "but do you have to make fun of your pupil?"

He laughed all the more, and motioned for me to look again. With considerable misgivings I did so, and my Guide moved the tube slightly so that I saw a different view. A telescope! Never before had I seen one. Never have I forgotten that sight of a man on a horse riding up inside the tube towards me. I am often reminded of it when a western person says "Impossible!" to some statement about the occult. That was certainly "impossible" to me. The Dalai Lama had brought a number of telescopes with him when he returned from India, and he was very fond of looking over the surrounding countryside. Here, too, I looked into a mirror for the first time and I certainly did not recognize the horrible looking creature that I saw. I saw a pale-faced little boy who had a large red scar in the middle of his forehead, and a nose which was undeniably prominent. I had seen my faint reflection before in water, but this was too plain. I have not bothered with mirrors since.

It may be thought that Tibet was a peculiar country to be without glass, telescopes or mirrors, but people did not want such things. Nor did we want wheels. Wheels made for speed, and for so-called civilization. We have long realized that in the rush of commercial life there is no time for the things of the mind. Our physical world had proceeded at a leisurely pace, so that our esoteric knowledge could grow, and expand. We have for thousands of years known the truth of clairvoyance, telepathy, and other branches of metaphysics. While it is quite true that many lamas can sit naked in the snow, and by thought alone melt the snow around them, such things are not demonstrated for the delight of the mere sensation seeker. Some lamas, who are masters of the occult, definitely can levitate, but they do not display their powers to entertain naive onlookers. The teacher, in Tibet, always makes sure that his pupil is morally fit to be trusted with such powers. It follows from this, that as the teacher must be absolutely sure of the moral integrity of the student, metaphysical powers are never abused, as only the right people are taught. These powers are in no way magical, they are merely the outcome of using natural laws.

In Tibet there are some who can best develop in company, and others who have to retire to solitude. These latter men go to outlying lamaseries and enter a hermit's cell. It is a small room, usually built on the side of a mountain. The stone walls are thick, perhaps six feet thick so that no sound can penetrate. The hermit enters, at his own desire, and the entrance is walled up. There is no light whatever, no furnishings, nothing but the empty stone box. Food is passed in once a day through a light-trapped, soundproofed hatch. Here the hermit stays, first for three years, three months and three days. He meditates on the nature of Life, and on the nature of Man. For no reason whatever can he leave that cell in the physical body. During the last month of his stay a very small hole is made in the roof to allow a faint ray of light to enter. It is enlarged day by day so that the hermit's eyes become used to the light once again. Otherwise he would go blind as soon as he emerged. Very often these men return to their cell after only a few weeks, and stay there for life. It is not such a sterile, worthless existence as one might suppose. Man is a spirit, a creature of another world, and once he can become free of the bonds of the flesh, he can roam the world as a spirit and can help by thought. Thoughts, as we in Tibet well

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know, are waves of energy. Matter is energy condensed. It is thought, carefully directed and partly condensed, which can cause an object to move "by thought". Thought, controlled in another way; can result in telepathy, and can cause a person at a distance to do a certain action. Is this so very difficult to believe, in a world which regards as commonplace the act of a man speaking into a microphone guiding a plane to land in dense fog, when the pilot can see no ground at all? With a little training, and no skepticism, man could do this by telepathy instead of making use of a fallible machine.

My own esoteric development did not entail this prolonged seclusion in total darkness. It took another form which is not available to the larger number of men who want to become hermits. My training was directed towards a specific purpose, and by direct order of the Dalai Lama. I was taught such things by another method, as well as by hypnosis, which cannot be discussed in a book of this nature. It will suffice to state that I was given more enlightenment than the average hermit can obtain in a very long lifetime. My visit to the Potala was in connection with the first stages of this training, but more of that later. I was fascinated by that telescope, and I used it quite a lot to examine the places I knew so well. The Lama Mingyar Dondup explained the principles in minute detail so that I could understand that there was no magic involved, but just ordinary laws of nature.

Everything was explained, not merely about the telescope, but lessons were given as to why a certain thing happened. I could never say "Oh! It is magic!" without having an explanation of the laws involved. Once during this visit I was taken to a perfectly dark room. The Lama Mingyar Dondup said, "Now you stand here, Lobsang, and watch that white wall." Then he blew out the flame of the butter-lamp and did something to the shutter of the window. Instantly there appeared on the wall before me a picture of Lhasa, but upside down! I shouted with amazement at the sight of men, women, and yaks walking about upside down. The picture suddenly flickered, and everything was the right way up.

The explanation about "bending light rays" really puzzled me more than anything; how could one bend light? I had had demonstrated to me the method of breaking jars and pitchers with a soundless whistle, that was quite simple and not worth a further thought, but bending light! Not until a special piece of apparatus, consisting of a lamp the light of which was hidden by various slats, was brought from another room, could I understand the matter. Then I could see the rays bend, and nothing surprised me after.

The store rooms of the Potala were crammed full of wonderful statues, ancient books, and most beautiful wall paintings of religious subjects. The very, very few western people who have seen any of them, consider them to be indecent. They portray a male and a female spirit in close embrace, but the intention of these pictures is very far from being obscene, and no Tibetan would ever regard them as such. These two nude figures in embrace are meant to convey the ecstasy which follows the union of Knowledge and Right Living. I admit that I was horrified beyond measure when I first saw that the Christians worshipped a tortured man nailed to a cross as their symbol. It is such a pity that we all tend to judge the peoples of other countries by our own standards.

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For centuries gifts have been arriving at the Po-tala from various countries, gifts for the Dalai Lama of the time. Nearly all those presents have been stored in rooms, and I had a wonderful time turning out and obtaining psychometrical impressions as to why the things were sent in the first place. It was indeed an education in motives. Then, after I had stated my impression as obtained from the object, my Guide would read from a book and tell me the exact history, and what had happened after. I was pleased at his more and more frequent, "You are right, Lobsang, you are doing very well indeed."

Before leaving the Potala we made a visit to one of the underground tunnels. I was told that I could visit just one, as I would see the others at a later date. We took flaring torches and cautiously climbed down what seemed to be endless steps, and slithered along smooth rocky passages. These tunnels, I was told, had been made by volcanic action countless centuries before. On the walls were strange diagrams and drawings of quite unfamiliar scenes. I was more interested in seeing the lake which I had been told stretched for miles and miles at the end of one passage. At last we entered a tunnel which grew wider and wider, until suddenly the roof disappeared to where the light of our torches would not reach. A hundred yards more, and we stood at the edge of water such as I had never seen before. It was black and still, with the blackness that made it appear almost invisible, more like a bottomless pit than a lake. Not a ripple disturbed the surface, not a sound broke the silence. The rock upon which we stood also was black, it glistened in the light of the torches, but a little to one side was a glitter on the wall. I walked towards it, and saw that in the rock there was a broad band of gold that was perhaps fifteen to twenty feet long and reached from my neck to my knees. Great heat had once started to melt it from the rock, and it had cooled in lumps like golden candle grease. The Lama Mingyar Dondup broke the silence: "This lake goes to the River Tsangpo forty miles away. Years and years ago an adventurous party of monks made a raft of wood, and made paddles with which to propel it. They stocked the raft with torches, and pushed off from the shore. For miles they paddled, exploring, then they came to an even larger space where they could not see walls or roof. They drifted on as they paddled gently, not sure which way to go."

I listened, picturing it vividly. The Lama continued: "They were lost, not knowing which was forward or which was backward. Suddenly the raft lurched, there was a blast of wind which extinguished their torches, leaving them in complete darkness, and they felt that their fragile craft was in the grip of the Water Demons. Around they spun, leaving them giddy and sick. They clung to the ropes that held the wood together. With the violent motion, little waves washed over the top and they became wet through. Their speed increased, they felt that they were in the grip of a ruthless giant pulling them to their doom. How long they traveled they had no means of telling. There was no light, the darkness was solid black, such as never was upon the surface of the earth. There was a scraping, grating noise, and stunning blows and crushing pressures. They were flung off the raft and forced under the water. Some of them had just time to gulp air. Others were not so fortunate. Light appeared, greenish and uncertain, it became brighter. They were twisted and thrown, then they shot up into brilliant sunshine.

"Two of them managed to reach the shore more than half drowned, battered and

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bleeding. Of the other three there was no trace. For hours they lay half between death and life. Eventually one roused sufficiently to look about him. He nearly collapsed again from the shock. In the distance was the Po-tala. Around them were green meadows with grazing yaks. At first they thought that they had died, and this was a Tibetan Heaven. Then they heard footsteps beside them, and a herdsman was looking down at them. He had seen the floating wreckage of the raft and had come to collect it for his own use. Eventually the two monks managed to convince the man that they were monks, for their robes had been completely torn off, and he agreed to go to the Potala for litters. Since that day very little has been done to explore the lake, but it is known that there are islands a little way beyond the range of our torches. One of them has been explored, and what was found you will see later when you are initiated."

I thought of it all and wished that I could have a raft and explore the lake. My Guide had been watching my expression: suddenly he laughed and said: "Yes, it would be fun to explore, but why waste our bodies when we can do the search in the astral! You can, Lobsang. Within a very few years you will be competent to explore this place with me, and add to the total knowledge we have of it. But for now, study, boy, study. For both of us."

Our torches were flickering low and it seemed to me that we should soon be groping blindly in the darkness of the tunnels. As we turned away from the lake I thought how foolish of us not to bring spare lights. At that moment the Lama Mingyar Dondup turned to the far wall and felt about. From some hidden niche he produced more torches and lit them from those now almost smoldering out.

"We keep spares here, Lobsang, because it would be difficult to find one's way out in the dark. Now let us be going."

Up the sloping passages we toiled, pausing a while to regain our breath and to look at some of the drawings on the walls. I could not understand them, they appeared to be of giants, and there were machines so strange as to be utterly beyond my comprehension. Looking at my Guide I could see that he was quite at home with these drawings, and in the tunnels. I was looking forward to other visits here, there was some mystery about it all, and I never could hear of a mystery without trying to get to the bottom of it. I could not bear the idea of spending years guessing at a solution when there was a chance of finding the answer, even if in so doing I was involved in considerable danger. My thoughts were interrupted by: "Lobsang! You are mumbling like an old man. We have a few more steps to go, and then it is daylight again. We will go on the roof and use the telescope to point out the site where those monks of old came to the surface."

When we did so, when we were on the roof, I wondered why we could not ride the forty miles and actually visit the place. The Lama Mingyar Dondup told me that there was nothing much to see, certainly nothing that the telescope would not reveal. The outlet from the lake was apparently far below the water-level and there was nothing to mark the spot, except a clump of trees which had been planted there by order of the previous Incarnation of the Dalai Lama.

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## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **AT THE WILD ROSE FENCE**

The next morning we made our leisurely preparations to return to Chakpori. For us the Potala visit was quite a holiday. Before leaving I rushed up to the roof to have a last look at the countryside through the telescope. On a roof of the Chakpori a small acolyte was lying on his back reading, and occasionally tossing small pebbles on to the bald heads of monks in the courtyard. Through the glass I could see the impish grin on his face as he ducked back out of sight of the puzzled monks below. It made me acutely uncomfortable to realize that the Dalai Lama had no doubt watched me do similar tricks. In future, I resolved, I would confine my efforts to the side of the buildings hidden from the Potala. But it was time to leave. Time to say our thanks to those lamas who had worked to make our short stay so pleasant. Time to be particularly nice to the Dalai Lama's personal steward. He had charge of the "foods from India". I must have pleased him, because he made me a farewell gift which I was not slow to eat. Then, fortified, we started down the steps on our way back to the Iron Mountain. As we reached halfway we became aware of shouts and calls, and passing monks pointed back, behind us. We stopped, and a breathless monk rushed down and gasped out a message to the Lama Mingyar Dondup. My Guide halted.

"Wait here for me, Lobsang, I shall not be very long." With that he turned and walked up the steps again. I idled around, admiring the view, and looking at my former home. Thinking of it, I turned, and almost fell over backwards as I saw my father riding towards me. As I looked at him he looked at me and his lower jaw dropped slightly as he recognized me. Then, to my unutterable pain, he ignored me, and rode on. I looked at his retreating back and called "Father!" He took no notice whatever, but rode stolidly on. My eyes felt hot, I began to tremble, and I thought that I was going to disgrace myself in public, on the steps of the Potala of all places. With more self control than I thought I possessed I straightened my back and gazed out over Lhasa.

After about half an hour the Lama Mingyar Dondup came riding down the steps and leading another horse. "Get on, Lobsang, we have to get to Sera in a hurry, one of the abbots there has had a bad accident."

I saw that there was a case tied to each saddle, and guessed that it was my Guide's equipment. Along the Lingkhör road we galloped, past my former home, scattering pilgrims and beggars alike. It did not take us long to reach Sera Lamasery, where monks



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were waiting for us. We jumped off the horses, each carrying a case, and an abbot led us in to where an old man lay on his back.

His face was the colour of lead, and the life force seemed to be flickering almost to a halt. The Lama Mingyar Dondup called for boiling water, which was ready, and into it he dropped certain herbs. While I was stirring this, the Lama examined the old man, who had a fractured skull as a result of falling. A piece of bone was depressed and was exerting pressure on the brain. When the liquid was cool enough we mopped the old man's head with it, and my Guide cleaned his hands with some of it. Taking a sharp knife from his case, he quickly made a U-shaped cut through the flesh, right through to the bone. There was little bleeding, the herbs prevented it. More herbal lotion was mopped on, and the flap of flesh was turned back and cleared away from the bone. Very, very gently the Lama Mingyar Dondup examined the area and found where the skull bone had been crushed in and was hanging below the normal level of the skull. He had put a lot of instruments into a bowl of disinfecting lotion before commencing, now he took from the bowl two silver rods, flattened at one end, and with serrations in the flat part. With extreme care he inserted the thinnest edge into the widest fracture of the bone and held it rigidly while he took a firmer grip of the bone with the other rod.

Gently, very gently, he prized up the flap of bone so that it was just above the normal level. He wedged it there with one rod and said: "Now pass the bowl, Lobsang." I held it so that he could take what he wanted, and he took a small spike of silver, just a minute triangular wedge. This he pressed into the crack between the normal skull bone and the fractured edge, which was now slightly above the level. Slowly he pressed the bone a little. It moved slightly, and he pressed just a little more. The level was now normal. "It will knit together, and the silver, being an inert metal, will cause no trouble."

He mopped the area with more herbal lotion, and carefully put back the flap of flesh which had been left attached by one side. With boiled hair from a horse's tail he stitched the flap, and covered the site of the operation with a herbal paste tied in place with boiled cloth.

The old abbot's life force had been growing stronger since the pressure was relieved from his brain. We propped him up with cushions so that he was in a semi-sitting position. I cleaned the instruments in fresh boiling lotion, dried them on boiled cloth and packed everything carefully back into the two cases. As I was cleaning my hands after, the old man's eyes flickered open, and he gave a weak smile as he saw the Lama Mingyar Dondup bending over him.

"I knew that only you could save me, that is why I sent the mind message to the Peak. My task is not yet finished and I am not ready to leave the body."

My Guide looked at him carefully and replied: "You will recover from this. A few days of discomfort, a headache or two, and when that has gone you can go about your work. For a few days you must have someone with you when you sleep, so that you do not lie flat. After three or four days you will have no cause for worry."

I had gone to the window and was looking out. It was quite interesting to see condi-

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tions in another lamasery. The Lama Mingyar Dondup came to me and said: "You did well, then, Lobsang, we shall make a team. Now I want to show you around this community, it is very different from ours."

We left the old abbot in the care of a lama, and went out into the corridor. The place was not so clean as at Chakpori, nor did there seem to be any strict discipline. Monks seemed to come and go as they pleased. The temples were uncared for, compared to ours, and even the incense was more bitter. Gangs of boys were playing in the courtyards— at Chakpori they would have been hard at work. The prayer-wheels were for the most part unturned. Here and there an aged monk sat and twirled the Wheels, but there was none of the order, cleanliness, and discipline which I had come to take as average. My Guide said: "Well, Lobsang, would you like to stay here and have their easy life?"

"No, I would not, I think they are a lot of savages here," I said.

He laughed. "Seven thousand of them! It is always the noisy few who bring the silent majority into disrepute."

"That may be," I replied. "But although they call this the Rose Fence, that is not what I would call it."

He looked at me with a smile: "I believe you would take on the job of bringing discipline to this lot single-handed."

It was a fact that our Lamasery had the strictest discipline of any, most of the others were very lax indeed, and when the monks there wanted to laze, well, they just lazed and nothing was said about it. Sera, or the Wild Rose Fence as it is really called, is three miles from the Potala and is one of the lamaseries known as "The Three Seats". Drebung is the largest of the three, with not less than ten thousand monks. Sera comes next in importance with about seven thousand five hundred monks, while Ganden is the least important with a mere six thousand. Each is like a complete town with streets, colleges, temples, and all the usual buildings that go to make up a township. The streets were patrolled by the Men of Kham. Now, no doubt, they are patrolled by Communist soldiers! Chakpori was a small community, but an important one. As the Temple of Medicine, it was then the "Seat of Medical Learning" and was well represented in the Council Chamber of the government.

At Chakpori we were taught what I shall term "judo". That is the nearest English word I can find, the Tibetan description of sung-thru-kyom-pa tu depo le-la-po cannot be translated, nor can our technical word of amnree. "Judo" is a very elementary form of our system. Not all lamaseries have this training, but we at Chakpori were taught it to give us self-control, to enable us to deprive others of consciousness for medical purposes, and to enable us to travel safely in rougher parts of the country. As medical lamas we traveled extensively.

Old Tzu had been a teacher of the art, perhaps the best exponent of it in Tibet, and he had taught me all he knew—for his own satisfaction in doing a job well. Most men and boys knew the elementary holds and throws, but I knew them when I was four years of

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age. This art, we believe, should be used for self defense and self-control, and not after the manner of a prizefighter. We are of the opinion that the strong man can afford to be gentle, while the weak and unsure brag and boast.

Our judo was used to deprive a person of consciousness when, for instance, setting broken bones, or extracting teeth. There is no pain with it, and no risk. A person can be made unconscious before he is aware of its onset, and he can be restored to full consciousness hours or seconds later without ill effect. Curiously enough, a person made unconscious while speaking will complete the sentence upon awakening. Because of the obvious dangers of this higher system, this and "instant" hypnotism were taught only to those who could pass most stringent tests of character. And then hypnotic blocks were imposed so that one should not abuse the powers conferred.

In Tibet, a lamasery is not merely a place where men of religious inclination live, but a self-contained town with all the usual facilities and amenities. We had our theatres in which to see religious and traditional plays. Musicians were ever ready to entertain us, and prove that in no other community were there such good players. Those monks who had money were able to buy food, clothing, luxuries, and books in the shops. Those who desired to save, deposited their cash in the lamastic equivalent of a bank. All communities, in any part of the world, have their offenders against the rules. Ours were arrested by monk-police and taken off to a court where they were given a fair trial. If found guilty, they had to serve their sentence in the lamastic prison. Schools of various types catered for all grades of mentality.

Bright boys were helped to make their way, but in all lamaseries other than Chakpori, the slothful person was permitted to sleep or dream his life away. Our idea was, one cannot influence the life of another, so let him catch up in his next incarnation. At Chakpori matters were different, and if one did not make progress, one was compelled to leave and seek sanctuary elsewhere where the discipline was not so strict.

Our sick monks were well treated; we had a hospital in the lamaseries and the indisposed were treated by monks who were trained in medicine and elementary surgery. The more severe cases were treated by specialists, such as the Lama Mingyar Dondup. Quiet often since leaving Tibet I have had to laugh at the Western stories about Tibetans thinking that a man's heart is on the left side, and a woman's is on the right. We saw enough dead bodies cut open to know the truth. I have also been much amused about the "filthy Tibetans, riddled with V.D.". The writers of such statements apparently have never been in those convenient places, in England and America, where the local citizenry are offered "Free and Confidential Treatment". We are filthy; some of our women, for instance, put stuff on the face, and have to mark the position of the lips so that one cannot miss. Most times they put stuff on their hair to make it shine, or to alter the colour. They even pluck eyebrows and colour nails, sure signs that Tibetan women are "filthy and depraved".

But to return to our lamastic community; often there were visitors, they might be traders or monks. They were given accommodation in the lamastic hotel. They also paid for such accommodation! Not all monks were celibate. Some thought that "single blessed-

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ness" did not induce the right frame of mind for contemplation. Those were able to join a special sect of Red Hat monks who were permitted to marry. They were in the minority. The Yellow Hats, a celibate sect, were the ruling class in religious life. In "married" lamaseries, monks and nuns worked side by side in a well-ordered community, and most times the "atmosphere" there was not so rough as in a purely male community. Certain lamaseries had their own printing-works so that they could print their own books. Usually they made their own paper.

This latter was not a healthy occupation, because one form of tree bark used in paper manufacture was highly poisonous. While this prevented any insect from attacking Tibetan paper, it also had a bad effect on the monks, and those who worked at this trade complained of severe headaches and worse. In Tibet we did not use metal type. All our pages were drawn on wood of suitable character, and then everything except the drawn outlines was pared away, leaving the parts to be printed standing high above the rest of the board. Some of these boards were three feet wide by eighteen inches deep and the detail would be quite intricate. No board containing the slightest mistake was used. Tibetan pages are not like the pages of this book, which are longer than they are wide: we used wide and short pages, and they were always unbound. The various loose sheets were kept between carved wooden covers. In printing, the carved board of page contents was laid flat. One monk ran an ink roller over the whole surface, making sure of even distribution. Another monk took up a sheet of paper and quickly spread it on the board, while a third monk followed with a heavy roller to press the paper well down. A fourth monk lifted off the printed page and passed it to an apprentice, who put it to one side. There were very few smudged sheets, these were never used for the book, but were kept for the apprentices to practice upon. At Chakpori we had carved wooden boards about six feet high and about four feet wide: these had carvings of the human figure and the various organs. From them were made wall charts, which we had to colour. We had astrological charts as well. The charts on which we erected horoscopes were about two feet square. In effect they were maps of the heavens at the time of a person's conception and birth. On the map-blanks we inserted the data which we found in the carefully prepared mathematical tables which we published.

After looking over the Rose Fence Lamasery and, in my case comparing it unfavorably with ours, we returned to the room to see the old abbot again. During the two hours of our absence he had improved very greatly and was now able to take much greater interest in things around him. In particular he was able to pay attention to the Lama Mingyar Dondup, to whom he seemed very attached. My Guide said: "We must leave now, but here are some powdered herbs for you. I will give full instructions to your Priest in Charge as we leave." Three little leather bags were taken from his case and handed over. Three little bags which meant life, instead of death, to an aged man.

In the entrance courtyard we found a monk holding two deplorably frisky ponies. They had been fed and rested and were now very ready to gallop. I was not. Fortunately for me, the Lama Mingyar Dondup was quite content for us to amble along. The Rose Fence is about three thousand seven hundred yards from the nearest part of the Lingkhör road. I was not anxious to pass my old home. My Guide evidently caught my thoughts,

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for he said: "We will cross the road to the Street of Shops. There is no hurry tomorrow is a new day which we have not yet seen."

I was fascinated to look at the shops of the Chinese traders and to listen to their high shrill voices as they bickered and chattered at the prices. Just opposite their side of the street was a chorten, symbolizing immortality of the ego, and behind that loomed a gleaming temple to which the monks of nearby Shede Gompa were streaming. A few minutes' ride and we were in the lanes of cluttered houses which clustered as if for protection in the shadow of the Jo-Kank. "Ah" I thought, "last time I was here I was a free man, not training to be a monk. Wish it was all a dream and I could wake up!" Down the road we ambled, and turned right to the road which led over the Turquoise Bridge. The Lama Mingyar Dondup turned to me and said: "So you still do not want to be a monk? It is quite a good life, you know. At the end of this week the annual party are going to the hills to gather herbs. This time I do not want you to go. Instead, study with me so that you can take the examination for Trappa when you are twelve. I have planned to take you on a special expedition to the highlands to obtain some very rare herbs." Just then we had reached the end of the village of Sho and were approaching the Pargo Kaling, the Western Gate of the Valley of Lhasa. A beggar shrunk against the wall: "Ho! Reverend Holy Lama of Medicine, please do not cure me of my ills or my living is gone." My Guide looked sad as we rode through the chorten forming the gate. "So many of these beggars, Lobsang, so unnecessary. It is they who give us a bad name abroad. In India, and in China where I went with the Precious One, people talked of the beggars of Lhasa, not realizing that some of them were rich. Well, well, perhaps after the fulfillment of the Prophecy of the Year of the Iron Tiger (1950 Communists invade Tibet) the beggars will be put to work. You and I will not be here to see it, Lobsang. For you, foreign lands. For me, a return to the Heavenly Fields."

It made me sad beyond measure to think that my beloved Lama would leave me, leave this life. Not then did I realize that life on Earth was but an illusion, a testing-place, a school. A knowledge of Man's behavior to those beset by adversity was beyond me. Now it is not!

Left we turned into the Lingkhör road, past the Kundu Ling, and left again to our own road leading up to the Iron Mountain. I never tired of looking at the coloured rock-carving which made up one side of our mountain. The whole cliff face was covered with carvings and paintings of deities. But the day was far advanced and we had no more time to spare. As we rode up I thought of the herb gatherers. Every year a party from the Chakpori went to the hills to gather herbs, dried them, and packed them into airtight bags. Here, in the hills, was one of the great storehouses of Nature's remedies. Very few people indeed had ever been to the highlands where there were things too strange to discuss. Yes, I decided, I could well forgo a visit to the hills this year, and I would study hard so that I should be fit to accompany the expedition to the highlands when the Lama Mingyar Dondup thought fit. The astrologers had said that I would pass the examination at the first attempt, but I knew that I should have to study hard; I knew that the prediction meant if I studied hard enough! My mental stage was at least equivalent to an eighteen-year-old, as always I had mixed with people much older than I, and I had to fend for myself.



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## **CHAPTER TEN**

### **TIBETAN BELIEFS**

It may be of some interest to give here some details of our way of life. Our religion is a form of Buddhism, but there is no word which can be transliterated. We refer to it as "The Religion", and to those of our faith as "Insiders". Those of other beliefs are termed "Outsiders". The nearest word, already known in the West, is Lamaism. It departs from Buddhism in that ours is a religion of hope and a belief in the future. Buddhism, to us, seems negative, a religion of despair. We certainly do not think that an all-seeing father is watching and guarding everyone, everywhere.

Many learned people have passed erudite comment on our religion. Many of them have condemned us because they were blinded by their own faith, and could see no other point of view. Some have even called us "satanic" because our ways are alien to them. Most of these writers have based their opinions on hearsay or on the writings of others. Possibly a very few have studied our beliefs for a few days and have then felt competent to know all, to write books on the subject, and to interpret and make known that which it takes our cleverest sages a lifetime to discover.

Imagine the teachings of a Buddhist or Hindu who had flipped the pages of the Christian Bible for an hour or two and then tried to explain all the subtler points of Christianity! None of these writers on Lamaism has lived as a monk in a lamasery from early boyhood and studied the Sacred Books. These Books are secret; secret because they are not available to those who want quick, effortless and cheap salvation. Those who want the solace of some ritual, some form of self-hypnosis, can have it if it will help them. It is not the Inner Reality, but childish self-deception. To some it may be very comforting to think that sin after sin can be committed and then, when the conscience prods too much, a gift of some kind to the nearest temple will so overwhelm the gods with gratitude that forgiveness will be immediate, all-embracing, and certain, and will enable one to indulge in a fresh set of sins. There is a God, a Supreme Being. What does it matter what we call Him? God is a fact.

Tibetans who have studied the true teachings of Buddha never pray for mercy or for favours, but only that they may receive justice from Man. A Supreme Being, as the es-

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sence of justice, cannot show mercy to one and not to another, because to do so would be a denial of justice. To pray for mercy or for favours, promising gold or incense if the prayer is answered, is to imply that salvation is available to the highest bidder, that God is short of money and can be “bought”.

Man can show mercy to Man, but very rarely does; the Supreme Being can show only justice. We are immortal souls. Our prayer: “Om! ma-ni pad-me Hum!”—which is written below—is often translated literally as “Hail to the Jewel of the Lotus!” We who have gone a little further know that the true meaning is “Hail to Man’s Overself!” There is death. As one doffs one’s clothes at the end of day, so does the soul doff the body when the latter sleeps. As a suit of clothes is discarded when worn out, so does the soul discard the body when the latter is worn or torn. Death is Birth. Dying is merely the act of being born in another plane of existence. Man, or the spirit of Man, is eternal. The body is but the temporary garment that clothes the spirit, to be chosen according to the task in hand upon earth. Outward appearance does not matter. The soul within does. A great prophet may come in the guise of a pauper—how better can one judge of Man’s charity to Man!—while one who has sinned in a past life when there is not poverty to drive him on.

Om! ma-ni pad-me Hum!

“The Wheel of Life” is what we call the act of being born, living on some world, dying, going back to the spirit state, and in time being reborn in different circumstances and conditions. A man may suffer much in a life, it does not necessarily mean that he was evil in a past life; it may be the best and quickest way of learning certain things. Practical experience is a better teacher than hearsay!

One who commits suicide may be reborn to live out the years cut short in the past life, but it does not follow that all who die young, or as babies, were suicides. The Wheel of Life applies to all, beggars and kings, men, and women, coloured people and white. The Wheel is but a symbol of course, but one which makes matters clear to those who have no time to make a long study of the subject. One cannot explain Tibetan belief in a paragraph or two: the Kangyur, or Tibetan Scriptures, consist of over a hundred books on the subject, and even then it is not fully dealt with. There are many books hidden within remote lamaseries which are seen by Initiates alone.

For centuries peoples of the East have known of the various occult forces and laws and that these were natural. Instead of trying to disprove such forces on the grounds that as they could not be weighed or tested with acids, they could not exist, Eastern scientists and researchers have striven to increase their command over these laws of nature. The mechanics of clairvoyance, for example, did not interest us, the results of clairvoyance did. Some people doubt clairvoyance; they are like the born blind who say that sight is impossible because they have not experienced it, because they cannot understand how an object some distance away can be seen when there is clearly no contact between it and the eyes!

People have auras, coloured outlines which surround the body, and by the intensity of those colours those experienced in the art can deduce a person’s health, integrity, and general state of evolution. The aura is the radiation of the inner life force, the ego, or

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soul. Around the head is a halo, or nimbus, which also is part of the force. At death the light fades as the ego leaves the body on its journey to the next stage of existence. It becomes a “ghost”. It drifts a little, perhaps dazed by the sudden shock of being free of the body. It may not be fully aware of what is happening. That is why lamas attend the dying that they may be informed of the stages through which they will pass. If this is neglected, the spirit may be earthbound by desires of the flesh. It is the duty of the priests to break these ties.

At frequent intervals we had a service for Guiding the Ghosts. Death has no terror for Tibetans, but we believe that one can have an easier passage from this life to the next if certain precautions are taken. It is necessary to follow clearly defined paths, and to think along certain lines. The service would be conducted in a temple with about three hundred monks present. In the center of the temple would be a group of perhaps five telepathic lamas sitting in a circle, face to face. As the monks, led by an abbot, chanted, the lamas would try to maintain telepathic contact with distressed souls. No translation from the Tibetan Prayers can do full justice to them, but this is an attempt: “Hear the voices of our souls, all you who wander unguided in the Borderlands. The living and the dead live in worlds apart. Where can their faces be seen and their voices heard? The first stick of incense is lit to summon a wandering ghost that he may be guided.

“Hear the Voices of our Souls, you of noble birth. This is the World of Illusion. Life on Earth is the Testing, that we may be purified of our dross and soar ever upwards. Hear the Voices of our Souls, all you that are in doubt. Soon the memory of the Earth life will pass away, and there will be Peace, and release from Suffering. The second stick of incense is lit that a doubting Soul may be guided.”

“Hear the voices of our souls, all you who wander. This is the World of Illusion. Life is but a dream. All that are born must die. Only the Way of Buddha leads to eternal life. The third stick of incense is lit to summon a wandering ghost that he may be guided.

“Hear the voices of our souls all you of great power, you who have been enthroned with mountains and rivers under your rule. Your reigns have lasted but a moment, and the complaints of your peoples have never ceased. The earth runs with blood, and the leaves of the trees are swayed by the sighs of the oppressed. The fourth stick of incense is lit to summon the ghosts of kings and dictators that they may be guided.

“Hear the voices of our souls, all you warriors who have invaded, wounded and killed. Where are your armies now? The earth groans, and weeds grow over the battlefields. The fifth stick of incense is lit to summon lonely ghosts of generals and lords for guidance.

“Hear the voices of our souls, all artists and scholars, you who have worked at painting and writing. In vain you have strained your sight and worn down your ink-slabs. Nothing of you is remembered, and your souls must continue on. The sixth stick of incense is lit to summon the ghosts of artists and scholars for guidance.

“Hear the voices of our souls, beautiful virgins and ladies of high degree whose youth could be compared to a fresh spring morning. After the embrace of lovers comes the

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breaking of hearts. The autumn, then the winter, comes, trees and flowers fade, as do beauty, and become but skeletons. The seventh stick of incense is lit to summon the wandering ghosts of virgins and ladies of high degree that they may be guided away from the ties of the world.

“Hear the voices of our souls, all beggars and thieves and those who have committed crimes against others and who cannot now obtain rest. Your soul wanders friendless in the world, and you have not justice within you. The eighth stick of incense is lit to summon all those ghosts who have sinned and who now wander alone.

“Hear the voices of our souls, prostitutes, women of the night, and all those that have been sinned against and who now wander alone in ghostly realms. The ninth stick of incense is lit to summon them for guidance that they may be freed from the bonds of the world.”

In the incense-laden dusk of the temple the flickering butter-lamps would cause living shadows to dance behind the golden images. The air would grow tense with the concentration of the telepathic monks as they strove to maintain contact with those who had passed from the world, yet were still bound to it. Russet-robed monks sitting in lines facing each other, would intone the Litany of the Dead, and hidden drums would beat out the rhythm of the human heart. From other parts of the temple, as in the living body, would come the growling of internal organs, the rustling of body fluids, and the sighing of air in the lungs. As the ceremony continued, with directions to those who had passed over, the tempo of the body sounds would change, become slow, until at last would come the sounds of the spirit leaving the body.

A rustling, quavering gasp, and—silence. The silence that comes with death. Into that silence would come an awareness, discernible to even the least psychic, that other things were around, waiting, listening. Gradually, as the telepathic instruction continued, the tension would lessen as the unquiet spirits moved on towards the next stage of their journey.

We believe, firmly, that we are reborn time after time. But not merely to this earth. There are millions of worlds, and we know that most of them are inhabited. Those inhabitants may be in very different forms to those we know, they may be superior to humans. We in Tibet have never subscribed to the view that Man is the highest and most noble form of evolution. We believe that much higher life forms are to be found elsewhere, and they do not drop atom bombs. In Tibet I have seen records of strange craft in the skies. “The Chariots of the Gods” most people called them. The Lama Mingyar Dondup told me that a group of lamas had established telepathic communication with these “gods”, who said that they were watching Earth, apparently in much the same way as humans watch wild and dangerous animals in a zoo. Much has been written about levitation. It is possible, as I have often seen it, but it takes much practice. There is no real point in engaging in levitation as there is a far simpler system. Astral traveling is easier and surer. Most lamas do it, and anyone who is prepared to use some patience can indulge in the useful and pleasant art.

During our waking hours on Earth our ego is confined to the physical body, and un-

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less one is trained it is not possible to separate them. When we sleep it is only the physical body which needs rest, the spirit disengages itself and usually goes to the spirit realm in much the same way as a child returns home at the end of the school day. The ego and physical bodies maintain contact by means of the “silver cord”, which is capable of unlimited extension. The body stays alive so long as the silver cord is intact; at death the cord is severed as the spirit is born into another life in the spirit world, just as a baby’s umbilical cord is severed to part it from its mother. Birth, to a baby, is death to the sheltered life it led within the mother’s body. Death, to the spirit, is birth again into the freer world of spirit. While the silver cord is intact, the ego is free to roam during sleep, or consciously in the case of those specially trained. The roaming of the spirit produces dreams, which are impressions transmitted along the silver cord. As the physical mind receives them they are “rationalized” to fit in with one’s earth belief. In the world of spirit there is no time—“time” is a purely physical concept—and so we have cases where long and involved dreams seem to occur in the fraction of a second. Probably everyone has had a dream in which a person far away, perhaps across the oceans, has been met and spoken to. Some message may have been given, and on awakening there is usually a strong impression of something that should be remembered. Frequently there is the memory of meeting a distant friend or relative and it is no surprise to hear from that person within a very short time. In those who are untrained the memory is often distorted and the result is an illogical dream or nightmare.

In Tibet we travel much by astral projection, not by levitation—and the whole process is within our control. The ego is made to leave the physical body, although still connected to it by the silver cord. One can travel where one wills, as quickly as one can think. Most people have the ability to engage in astral travel. Many have actually started out, and being untrained, have experienced a shock. Probably everyone has had the sensation of just drifting off to sleep and then, without apparent reason, being violently awakened by a sudden powerful jerk. This is caused by too rapid exteriorization of the ego, an ungentle parting of physical and astral bodies. It causes contraction of the silver cord, and the astral is snatched back into the physical vehicle. It is a much worse feeling when one has traveled and is returning. The astral is floating many feet above the body, like a balloon at the end of a string.

Something, perhaps some external noise, causes the astral to return to the body with excessive rapidity. The body awakens suddenly, and there is the horrible feeling that one has fallen off a cliff and awakened just in time. Astral traveling, under one’s full control, and while fully conscious, can be accomplished by almost anyone. It needs practice, but above all, in the early stages, it demands privacy, where one can be alone without fear of interruption. This is not a textbook of metaphysics, so there is no point in giving instructions on astral traveling, but it should be emphasized that it can be a disturbing experience unless one has a suitable teacher. There is no actual danger, but there is a risk of shocks and emotional disturbances if the astral body is allowed to leave or return to the physical body out of phase or coincidence. People with heart weaknesses should never practice astral projection. While there is no danger in projection itself, there is grave danger—to those with a weak heart—if another person enters the room and disturbs the body or cord. The resulting shock could prove fatal, and this would be



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very inconvenient indeed as the ego would have to be reborn to finish that particular span of life before it could process to the next stage.

We Tibetans believe that everyone before the Fall of Man had the ability to travel in the astral, see by clairvoyance, telepathize, and levitate. Our version of that Fall is that Man abused the occult powers and used them for self interest instead of for the development of mankind as a whole. In the earliest days mankind could converse with mankind by telepathy. Local tribes had their own versions of vocal speech which they used exclusively among themselves. The telepathic speech was, of course, by thought, and could be understood by all, regardless of local language. When the power of telepathy was lost, through abuse, there was— Babel!

We do not have a “Sabbath” day as such: ours are “Holy Days” and are observed on the eighth and fifteenth of each month. Then there are special services and the days are regarded as sacred and no work is normally done. Our annual festivals, I have been told, correspond somewhat to the Christian festivals, but my knowledge of the latter is quite insufficient for me to comment. Our festivals are :

First month, this corresponds roughly to February, from the first to the third day we celebrate Logsar. This, in the Western world, would be called the New Year. It is a great occasion for games as well as religious services. Our greatest ceremony of the whole year is held from the fourth to the fifteenth day, these are the “Days of Supplication”. Our name for it is Mon-lam. This ceremony really is the highlight of the religious and secular year. On the fifteenth day of this same month we have the Anniversary of Buddha’s Conception. This is not a time for games, but one of solemn thanksgiving. To complete the month, we have, on the twenty-seventh; a celebration which is partly religious, partly mythical. It is the Procession of the Holy Dagger. With that, the events of the first month are ended.

The second month, which approximates to March, is fairly free of ceremony. On the twenty-ninth day there is the Chase and Expulsion of the Demon of Ill-luck. The third month, April, also has very few public ceremonies. On the fifteenth day there is the Anniversary of Revelation.

With the arrival of the eighth day of the fourth month, May by the Western calendar, we celebrate the Anniversary of Buddha’s Renunciation of the World. This, so far as I understand, is similar to the Christian Lent. We had to live even more austere during the days of Renunciation. The fifteenth day was the Anniversary of Buddha’s Death. We regarded it as the anniversary of all those who had left this life. “All Souls’ Day” was another term for it. On that day we burned our sticks of incense to call the spirits of those who wandered earthbound.

It will be understood that these are merely the major festivals, there are many minor days which had to be marked, and ceremonies attended, but which are not of sufficient importance to enumerate here.

June was the month when, on the fifth day, we “medical lamas” had to attend special ceremonies at other lamaseries. The celebrations were of Thanks for the Ministrations of

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the Medical Monks, of which Buddha was the founder. On that day we could do no wrong, but on the day after we were certainly called to account for what our superiors imagined we had done!

The Anniversary of Buddha's Birth came on the fourth day of the sixth month, July. Then also we celebrated the First Preaching of the Law. Harvest Festival was on the eighth day of the eighth month, October. Because Tibet is an arid country, very dry, we depended upon the rivers to a much greater extent than in other countries.

Rainfall was slight in Tibet, so we combined Harvest Festival with a Water Festival, as without water from the rivers there would be no harvest from the land.

The twenty-second day of the ninth month, November, was the anniversary of Buddha's Miraculous Descent from Heaven. The next month, the tenth, we celebrate the Feast of the Lamps on the twenty-fifth day.

The final religious events of the year were on the twenty-ninth to thirtieth days of the twelfth month, which is the junction of January and February according to the Western calendar. At this time we had the Expulsion of the Old Year, and making ready for the new.

Our calendar is very different indeed from the Western: we use a sixty-year cycle and each year is indicated by twelve animals and five elements in various combinations. The New Year is in February. Here is the Year Calendar for the present Cycle which started in 1927:

1927 the Year of the Fire Hare;

1928 the Year of the Earth Dragon;

1929 the Year of the Earth Serpent;

1930 the Year of the Iron Horse;

1931 the Year of the Iron Sheep;

1932 the Year of the Water Ape;

1933 the Year of the Water Bird;

1934 the Year of the Wood Dog; 1935 the Year of the Wood Hog;

1936 the Year of the Fire Mouse;

1937 the Year of the Fire Ox;

1938 the Year of the Earth Tiger;

1939 the Year of the Earth Hare;

1940 the Year of the Iron Dragon ;

1941 the Year of the Iron Serpent;

1942 the Year of the Water Horse;

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1943 the Year of the Water Sheep;  
1944 the Year of the Wood Ape;  
1945 the Year of the Wood Bird;  
1946 the Year of the Fire Dog;  
1947 the Year of the Fire Hog;  
1948 the Year of the Earth Mouse;  
1949 the Year of the Earth Ox;  
1950 the Year of the Iron Tiger;  
1951 the Year of the Iron Hare;  
1952 the Year of the Water Dragon;  
1953 the Year of the Water Serpent;  
1954 the Year of the Wood Horse;  
1955 the Year of the Wood Sheep;  
1956 the Year of the Fire Ape;  
1957 the Year of the Fire Bird;  
1958 the Year of the Earth Dog;  
1959 the Year of the Earth Hog;  
1960 the Year of the Iron Mouse;  
1961 the Year of the Iron Ox;  
and so on.

It is part of our belief that the probabilities of the future can be foretold. To us, divination, by whatever means, is a science and is accurate. We believe in astrology. To us “astrological influences” are but cosmic rays which are “coloured” or altered by the nature of the body reflecting them to Earth. Anyone will agree that one can have a camera, and a white light and take a picture of something. By putting various filters over the camera lens—or over the light—we can arrange for certain effects on the finished photograph. We can get orthochromatic, panchromatic, or infrared effects, to mention three out of a large number. People are affected in a similar way by the cosmic radiation impinging upon their own chemical and electrical personality.

Buddha says: “Stargazing and astrology, forecasting lucky or unfortunate events by signs, prognosticating good or evil, all these things are forbidden.” But, a later Decree in one of our Sacred Books says: “That power which is given to the few by nature, and for which that individual endures pain and suffering, that may be used. No psychic power may be used for personal gain, for worldly ambition, or as proof of the reality of such

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powers. Only thus can those not so gifted be protected.” My Attainment of the Third Eye had been painful, and it had increased the power with which I had been born. But in a later chapter we will return to the Opening of Third Eye. Here is a good place to mention more of astrology, and quote the names of three eminent Englishmen who have seen an astrological prophecy which came true.

Since 1027 all major decisions in Tibet have been taken with the aid of astrology. The invasion of my country by the British in 1904 was accurately foretold. On page 109 (of the original book) is a reproduction of the actual prophecy in the Tibetan language. It reads: “In the Year of the Wood Dragon. The first part of the year protects the Dalai Lama, after that fighting and quarreling robbers come forward. There are many enemies, troublous grief by weapons will arise, and the people will fight. At the end of the year a conciliatory speaker will end the war.” That was written before the year 1850, and concerns the year 1904, the “Wood-Dragon War”. Colonel Younghusband was in charge of the British Forces. He saw the Prediction at Lhasa. A Mr. L. A. Waddell, also of the British Army, saw the printed Prediction in the year 1902. Mr. Charles Bell, who later went to Lhasa, also saw it. Some other events which were accurately forecast were: 1910, Chinese Invasion of Tibet; 1911, Chinese Revolution and formation of the Nationalist Government; late 1911, eviction of Chinese from Tibet; 1914, war between England and Germany; 1933, passing from this life of the Dalai Lama; 1935, return of a fresh Incarnation of the Dalai Lama; 1950, “Evil forces would invade Tibet”. The Communists invaded Tibet in October 1950. Mr. Bell, later Sir Charles Bell, saw all those predictions in Lhasa. In my own case, everything foretold about me has come true. Especially the hardships.

The Science—for science it is—of preparing a horoscope is not one which can be dealt with in a few pages of a book of this nature. Briefly, it consists of preparing a map of the heavens as they were at the time of conception and at the time of birth. The exact hour of birth has to be known, and that time has to be translated into “star time”, which is quite different from all the zone times of the world. As the speed of the Earth in its orbit is nineteen miles a second, it will be seen that inaccuracy will make a tremendous difference. At the equator the rotational of the Earth is about one thousand and forty miles an hour. The world is tilted as it rolls, and the North Pole is about three thousand one hundred miles ahead of the South Pole in the autumn, but in spring the position is reversed. The longitude of the place of birth thus is of vital importance.

When the maps are prepared, those with the necessary training can interpret their meanings. The interrelationships of each and every planet has to be assessed, and the effect on the particular map calculated. We prepare a Conception Chart to know the influences in force during the very first moments of a person’s existence. The Birth Map indicates the influences in force at the moment the individual enters upon an unsuspecting world. To know of the future—we prepare a map of the time for which it is desired to have the reading, and compare it with the Natal Chart.

Some people say: “But can you really predict who is going to win the 2.30?” The answer is no! Not without casting the horoscope for every man, horse, and horse-owner concerned in the race. Closed eyes and a pin jabbing the starting list is the best method here. We can tell if a person will recover from an illness, or if Tom will marry Mary and

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live happily ever afterwards, but that deals with individuals. We can also say that if England and America do not check Communism, a war will start in the Year of the Wood Dragon, which in this cycle, is 1964. Then in that case, at the end of the century, there should be an attractive fireworks display to entertain any observers on Mars or Venus. Assuming that the Communists remain unchecked.

A further point which often seems to puzzle those of the Western world is the question of tracing one's past lives. People who have no skill in the matter say that it cannot be done, just as a totally deaf man might say: "I hear no sound, therefore there is no sound." It is possible to trace previous lives. It takes time, much working out of charts and calculations. A person may stand at an airport and wonder about the last calls of arriving aircraft. The onlookers perhaps can make a guess, but the control tower staff, with their specialized knowledge can say. If an ordinary sightseer has a list of aircraft registration letters and numbers, and a good timetable, he may be able to work out the ports of call himself. So can we with past lives. It would need a complete book at least to make the process clear and so it would be useless to delve more deeply now. It may be of interest to say what points Tibetan astrology covers.

We use nineteen symbols in the twelve Houses of Astrology. Those symbols indicate:

- Personality and self-interest;
- Finances, how one can gain or lose money;
- Relations, short journeys, mental and writing ability;
- Property and the conditions at the close of life;
- Children, pleasures and speculations;
- Illness, work, and small animals;
- Partnerships, marriage, enemies and lawsuits;
- Legacies;
- Long journeys and psychic matters;
- Profession and honours ;
- Friendships and ambitions;
- Troubles, restraints, and occult sorrows.

We can also tell the approximate time, or under what conditions, the following incidents will occur:

- Love, the type of person and the time of meeting;
- Marriage, when, and how it will work out;
- Passion, the "furious temper" kind;
- Catastrophe, and how it will occur, or if it will;



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Fatality;

Death, when and how;

Prison, or other forms of restraint ;

Discord, usually family or business quarrels;

Spirit, the stage of evolution reached.

Although I do astrology quite a lot, I find psychometry and “crystal gazing” much more rapid and no whit less accurate. It is also easier when one is bad at figures! Psychometry is the art of picking up faint impressions of past events from an article. Everyone has this ability to some extent. People enter an old church or temple, hallowed by the passing years, and will say: “What a calm, soothing atmosphere!” But the same people will visit the site of a gruesome murder and exclaim: “Oh! I don’t like it here, it is eerie, let’s get out.”

Crystal gazing is somewhat different. The “glass”—as mentioned above—is merely a focus for the rays from the Third Eye in much the same way as X-rays are brought to focus on a screen, and show a fluorescent picture. There is no magic at all involved, it is merely a matter of utilizing natural laws. In Tibet we have monuments to “natural laws”. Our chortens which range in size from five feet to fifty feet high, are symbols which compare with a crucifix, or ikon. All over Tibet these chortens stand. On the sketch map of Lhasa five are shown (in the original book), the Pargo Kaling is the largest, and is one of the gates of the city.

Chortens are always of the shape shown in the illustration below. The square indicates the solid foundation of the Earth. Upon it rests the Globe of Water, surmounted by a Cone of Fire. Above this is a Saucer of Air, and higher, the wavering Spirit (Ether) which is waiting to leave the world of materialism. Each element is reached by way of the Steps of Attainment. The whole symbolizes the Tibetan belief. We come to Earth when we are born.

During our life we climb upwards, or try to, by way of the Steps of Attainment. Eventually, our breath fails, and we enter into the spirit. Then, after a varying interval, we are reborn, to learn another lesson. The Wheel of Life symbolizes the endless round of birth-life-death-spirit-birth-life, and so on. Many ardent students make the serious mistake of thinking that we believe in those horrid hells sometimes pictured on the Wheel. A few illiterate savages may, but not those who have received enlightenment. Do Christians really believe that when they die Satan and Company get busy with the roasting and racking? Do they believe that if they go to the Other Place (being one of the minority!) they sit on a cloud in a nightshirt and take lessons in harp-playing? We believe that we learn on Earth, and that on Earth we get our “roasting and racking”. The Other Place, to us, is where we go when out of the body, where we can meet entities who also are out of the body. This is not spiritualism. It is instead a belief that during sleep, or after death, we are free to wander in astral planes.

Our own term for the higher reaches of these planes is “The Land of the Golden Light.”

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We are sure that when we are in the astral, after death, or when asleep, we can meet those we love, because we are in harmony with them. We cannot meet those we dislike, because that would be a state of disharmony, and such conditions cannot exist in the Land of the Golden Light.

All these things have been proved by time, and it does seem rather a pity that Western doubt and materialism have prevented the Science from being properly investigated. Too many things have been scoffed at in the past, and then proved right by the passage of the years. Telephones, radio, television, flying, and many more.

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## **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

### **TRAPPA**

My youthful determination was devoted to passing the examination at the first attempt. As the date of my twelfth birthday approached, I gradually slackened off studies, for the examination started on the day after my birthday. The past years had been filled with intensive studies. Astrology, herbal medicine, anatomy, religious ethics, and even on the correct compounding of incense. Tibetan and Chinese languages, with special reference to good calligraphy, and mathematics. There had been little time for games, the only “game” we had time for was judo, because we had a stiff examination on this subject. About three months before, the Lama Mingyar Dondup had said: “Not so much revision, Lobsang, it merely clutters up the memory. Be quite calm, as you are now, and the knowledge will be there.”

So the day arrived. At six in the morning I and fifteen other candidates presented ourselves at the examination hall. We had a short service to put us in the right frame of mind, and then, to make sure that none of us had yielded to unpriestly temptation, we had to strip and be searched, after which we were given clean robes. The Chief Examiner led the way from the little temple of the examination hall to the closed cubicles. These were stone boxes about six feet by ten feet in size and about eight feet high. Outside the boxes police-monks patrolled all the time. Each of us was led to a cubicle and told to enter. The door was shut, locked and a seal applied. When all of us had been sealed into our own little box, monks brought writing material and the first set of questions to a small trap in the wall. We were also brought buttered tea and tsampa. The monk who brought that told us that we could have tsampa three times a day, and tea as often as we wanted. Then we were left to deal with the first paper. One subject a day for six days, and we had to work from the first light in the morning until it was too dark to see at night. Our cubicles had no roof, so we got whatever light came into the main examination hall.

We stayed in our own separate boxes all the time, for no reason whatever were we permitted to leave. As the evening light began to fade, a monk appeared at the trap and demanded our papers. We then lay down to sleep until the following morning. From my

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own experience I can say that an examination paper on one subject, which takes fourteen hours to answer, certainly does test one's knowledge and nerves. On the night of the sixth day the written examinations were at an end. We were kept in our cubicles that night because in the morning we had to clean them out and leave them as we found them. The rest of the day was ours to spend as we desired. Three days after, when our written work had been checked, and our weaknesses noted, we were called before the examiners, one at a time. They asked us questions based on our weak points only, and their interrogation occupied the whole of the day.

The next morning the sixteen of us had to go to the room where we were taught judo. This time we were going to be examined on our knowledge of strangleholds, locks, breakfalls, throws, and self-control. Each of us had to engage with three other candidates. The failures were soon weeded out. Gradually the others were eliminated, and at last, due solely to my early training at the hands of Tzu, I was the only one left. I, at least, had passed top in judo! But only because of my early training, which at the time I had thought brutal and unfair.

We were given the next day to recover from the hard days of examination, and on the day following we were informed of the results. I and four others had passed. We would now become trappas, or medical priests. The Lama Mingyar Dondup, whom I had not seen during the whole time of the examinations, sent for me to go to his room. As I entered he beamed upon me: "You have done well, Lobsang. You are at the top of the list. The Lord Abbot has sent a special report to the Inmost One. He wanted to suggest that you be made a lama right away, but I have opposed it." He saw my rather pained look, and explained: "It is much better to study and pass on your own merits. To be given the status is to miss much training, training which you will find vital in later life. However, you can move into the room next to mine, because you will pass the examination when the time comes."

That seemed fair enough to me; I was quite willing to do whatever my Guide thought best. It gave me a thrill to realize that my success was his success, that he would get the credit for training me to pass as the highest in all subjects. Later in the week a gasping messenger, tongue protruding, and almost at the point of death—apparently!—arrived with a message from the Inmost One. Messengers always used their histrionic talents to impress upon one the speed with which they had traveled and the hardships they had endured to deliver the message entrusted to them. As the Potala was only a mile or so away I thought, his "act" rather overdone.

The Inmost One congratulated me on my pass, and said that I was to be regarded as a lama from that date. I was to wear lama robes, and have all the right and privileges of that status. He agreed with my Guide that I should take the examinations when I was sixteen years of age, "as in this way you will be induced to study those things which you would otherwise avoid, and so your knowledge will be increased by such studying".

Now that I was a lama I should have more freedom to study without being held back by a class. It also meant that anyone with specialized knowledge was free to teach me, so I could learn as quickly as I wished.

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One of the earliest things I had to learn was the art of relaxation, without which no real study of metaphysics can be undertaken. One day the Lama Mingyar Dondup came into the room where I was studying some books. He looked at me and said: "Lobsang, you are looking quite tense. You will not progress at peaceful contemplation unless you relax. I will show you how I do it." He told me to lie down as a start, for although one can relax sitting or even standing up, it is better to learn first by being supine. "Imagine you have fallen off a cliff," he said. "Imagine that you are on the ground below, a crumpled figure with all muscles slack, with limbs bent as they have fallen and with your mouth slightly open, for only then are the cheek muscles at ease." I fidgeted around until I had put myself the position he wanted.

"Now imagine that your arms and legs are full of little people who make you work by pulling on muscles. Tell those little people to leave your feet so that there is no feeling, no movement, no tension there. Let your mind explore your feet to be certain that no muscles are being used." I lay there trying to imagine little people. Think of Old Tzu wiggling my toes from the inside! Oh, I'll be glad to get rid of him. "Then do the same with your legs. The calves; you must have a lot of little people at work, Lobsang. They were hard at work this morning when you were jumping. Now give them a rest. March them up towards your head. Are they all out? Are you sure? Feel around with your mind. Make them leave the muscles untended, so that they are slack and flaccid." Suddenly he stopped and pointed: "Look!" he said, "you have forgotten someone in your thigh. A little man is keeping a tight muscle in your upper leg. Get him out, Lobsang, get him out."

Finally my legs were relaxed to his satisfaction.

"Now do the same with your arms," he said, "starting with your fingers. Make them leave, up past the wrists, march them to the elbows, to the shoulders. Imagine that you are calling away all those little people so that there is no longer any strain or tension or feeling." After I had got so far he said: "Now we come to the body itself. Pretend that your body is a lamasery. Think of all the monks inside pulling on muscles to make you work. Tell them to leave. See that they leave the lower part of the body first, after slackening off all the muscles. Make them drop what they are doing and leave. Make them loosen your muscles, all your muscles, so that your body is held together merely by the outer covering, so that everything sags and droops and finds its own level. Then your body is relaxed."

Apparently he was satisfied with my stage of progress, for he continued: "The head is perhaps the most important part for relaxation. Let us see what we can do with it. Look at your mouth, you have a tight muscle at each corner. Ease it off, Lobsang, ease it off each side. You are not going to speak or eat, so no tension, please. Your eyes are screwed up: There is no light to trouble them, so just lightly close the lids, just lightly, without any tension."

He turned away and looked out of the open window. "Our finest exponent of relaxation is outside sunning herself. You could take a lesson from the way in which a cat relaxes, there is none who can do it better."



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It takes quite a long time to write this, and it seems difficult when it is read, but with just a little practice it is a simple matter to relax within a second. This system of relaxation is one which never fails. Those who are tense with the cares of civilization would do well to practice on these lines, and the mental system which follows. For this latter I was advised to proceed somewhat differently. The Lama Mingyar Dondup said : “There is little gain in being at ease physically if you are tense mentally. As you lie here physically relaxed, let your mind for a moment dwell on your thoughts. Idly follow those thoughts and see what they are. See how trivial they are. Then stop them, permit no more thoughts to flow. Imagine a black square of nothingness, with the thoughts trying to jump from one side to the other. At first some will jump across. Go after them, bring them back, and make them jump back across the black space. Really imagine it, visualize it strongly, and in a very short time you will “see” blackness without effort and so enjoy perfect mental and physical relaxation.”

Here again it is far more difficult to explain than do. It really is a very simple affair with slight practice, and one must have relaxation. Many people have never shut off their mind and thoughts and they are like the people who try to keep going physically day and night. A person who tried to walk without rest for a few days and nights would soon collapse, yet the brain and mind are given no rest. With us everything was done to train the mind. We were taught judo to a high standard as an exercise in self control. The lama who taught us judo could repel and defeat ten attackers at once. He loved judo, and went out of his way to make the subject as interesting as possible. “Strangle holds” may seem savage and cruel to Western minds, but such an impression would be utterly wrong. As I have already shown, by giving a certain little touch to the neck we could make a person unconscious in a fraction of a second, before he knew he was losing consciousness. The little pressure paralyzed the brain harmlessly. In Tibet, where there are no anesthetics, we often used that pressure when extracting a difficult tooth, or in setting bones. The patient knew nothing, suffered nothing. It is also used in initiations when the ego is released from the body to do astral traveling.

With this training we were almost immune to falls. Part of judo is to know how to land gently, “breakfalls” it is termed, and it was a common exercise for us boys to jump off a ten—or fifteen—foot wall just for fun. Every other day, before starting our judo practice, we had to recite the Steps of the Middle Way, the keystones of Buddhism; these are:

Right Views: which are views and opinions free from delusions and self seeking.

Right Aspirations: by which one shall have high and worthy intentions and opinions.

Right Speech: in which one is kind, considerate, and truthful.

Right Conduct : this makes one peaceful, honest, and selfless.

Right Livelihood: to obey this, one must avoid hurting men or animals, and must give the latter their rights as beings.

Right Effort: one must have self-control, and undergo constant self training.

Right Mindfulness: in having the right thoughts and in trying to do that which is known

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to be right.

Right Rapture: this is the pleasure derived from meditating on the realities of life and on the Overself.

If any of us offended against the Steps we had to lie face down across the main entrance to the temple, so that all who entered had to step over the body. Here we would stay from the first dawn until dark, with no movement, and no food or drink. It was considered to be a great disgrace.

Now I was a lama. One of the elite. One of the “Superior Ones”. It sounded just fine. But there were catches: before I had to obey the frightening number of thirty-two Rules of Priestly Conduct. As a lama, to my horror and dismay, I found that the total was two hundred and fifty-three. And at Chakpori the wise lama did not break any of those Rules! It seemed to me that the world was so full of things to learn, I thought my head would burst. But it was pleasant to sit up on the roof and watch the Dalai Lama arrive at the Norbu Linga, or Jewel Park, just down below. I had to keep hidden when I so watched the Precious One, for no one must look down on him. Down below, too, but on the other side of our Iron Mountain, I could look on two beautiful parks, the Khati Linga, and just across the stream, called the Kaling Chu, the Dodpal Linga. “Linga” means “park”, or at least it is the nearest spelling according to the Western style of writing. More to the north I could gaze upon the Western Gate, the Pargo Kaling.

This great chorten straddled across the road leading from Drepung, past the village of Sho, and on to the heart of the city. Nearer, almost at the foot of the Chakpori, was a chorten commemorating one of our historical heroes, King Kesar, who lived in the war-like days before Buddhism and peace came to Tibet.

Work? We had plenty of that; but we had our compensations, our pleasures as well. It was compensation in full, and brimming over, to associate with men like the Lama Mingyar Dondup. Men whose sole thought was “Peace”, and help for others. It was payment, too, to be able to look over this beautiful valley so green and peopled with well-loved trees. To see the blue waters meandering through the land between the mountain ranges, to see the gleaming chortens, the picturesque lamaseries and hermitages perched on inaccessible crags. To look, with reverence, on the golden domes of the Potala so near to us, and the shining roofs of the Jo-Kang a little farther to the east. The comradeship of others, the rough good-fellowship of the lesser monks, and the familiar scent of incense as it wafted around the temples—these things made up our life, and it was a life worth living. Hardship? Yes, there was plenty. But it was worth it; in any community there are those of little understanding, of little faith: but here at Chakpori they were indeed in the minority.

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## **CHAPTER TWELVE**

### **HERBS AND KITES**

The weeks flew by. There was so much to do, to learn, and to plan. Now I could delve far more deeply into occult matters and receive special training. One day in early August, my Guide said: "This year we will go with the herb gatherers. You will gain much useful knowledge of herbs in their natural state, and we will introduce you to real kite flying!" For two weeks everyone was busy, leather bags had to be made, and the old ones cleaned. Tents had to be overhauled, and the animals carefully examined to see that they were fit and able to undertake the long trip. Our party was to be two hundred monks and we would make our base at the old Lamasery of Tra Yerpa and send out parties every day to search the neighborhood for herbs. At the end of August we set out amid much shouting and noise. Those who were to remain behind clustered around the walls, envious of the ones going to holiday and adventure. As a lama I now rode a white horse. A few of us were going to press on with the minimum of equipment so that we could have several days at Tra Yerpa before the others arrived. Our horses would travel fifteen to twenty miles a day, but the yaks rarely exceeded eight to ten miles a day. We were lightly loaded, as we took the minimum of equipment, preferring to arrive quickly. The yak train which followed more slowly had each animal carrying the usual hundred and seventy pound load.

The twenty-seven of us who were the advance party were glad indeed to arrive at the lamasery several days later. The road had been a difficult one, and I for one was not at all fond of horse riding. By now I could stay on even when the horse galloped, but there my prowess ended. Never could I stand on a saddle as some of the others did; I sat and clung, and if it was not graceful, then at least it was safe. We had been sighted approaching up the mountainside, and the monks who lived there permanently prepared huge quantities of buttered tea, tsampa and vegetables.

It was not entirely unselfish of them, they were anxious to have all the news of Lhasa and to receive the customary gifts which we brought. Up on the flat roof of the temple building, braziers of incense threw dense columns of smoke into the air. Up into the courtyard we rode, with new-found energy at the thought of the end of the journey. Most

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of the other lamas had old friends to meet. Everyone seemed to know the Lama Mingyar Dondup. He was swept from my sight by the welcoming throng, and I thought that once again I was all alone in the world, but after only a very few minutes I heard: "Lobsang, Lobsang, where are you?" I soon answered and before I knew what was happening the crowd had opened and more or less engulfed me. My Guide was talking to an elderly abbot, who turned and said: "So this is he? Well, well, well, and so young, too!"

My main concern as usual was food, and without wasting more time, everyone moved in the direction of the refectory, where we sat and ate in silence, as if we were still at Chakpori. There was some doubt as to whether Chakpori was a branch of Tra Yarpa, or the other way about. Certainly both lamaseries were amongst the oldest in Tibet. Tra Yarpa was famed as having some really valuable manuscripts dealing with herbal cures, and I was going to be able to read them and make all the notes I needed. There was also a report on the first expedition to the Chang Tang highlands, written by the ten men who did that strange journey. But of greatest interest to me at the present time was the level tableland just near, from which we were going to launch our kites.

The land here was strange. Immense peaks jutted out of continually rising ground. Flat tablelands, like terraced gardens, extended from the foot of peaks like broad steps reaching higher and higher. Some of these lower steps were rich in herbs. One form of moss found here had far greater absorptive powers than sphagnum. A small plant bearing yellow berries had amazing pain-deadening properties. The monks and boys would gather these herbs and lay them out to dry. I, as a lama, would now be able to supervise them, but for me this trip would consist mainly of practical instruction from the Lama Mingyar Dondup and herb specialists. At the present moment, as I looked around, the only thought in my mind was kites, man-lifting kites. Tucked away in the lamasery building behind me were bars of spruce which had been brought from a far country, for no such trees grew in Tibet, and spruce, probably from Assam, was considered as ideal for kite construction, as it would take hard knocks without fracturing and it was light and strong. After the kites were finished with, the wood would be examined and placed into store ready for the next time.

The discipline was not greatly relaxed here, we still had our midnight service, and the others at regular intervals. This, if one thought about it, was the wisest way, as it would be harder to observe our long hours later if we relaxed now. The whole of our class time was devoted to herb gathering and kite-flying.

Here, in this lamasery, clinging to the side of a mountain, we were still in daylight, while down below the ground was clothed in purple shadows, and the night wind could be heard rustling through the scant vegetation. The sun sank behind the far mountain-peaks and we, too, were in darkness. Below us the country looked like a black lake. Nowhere was there a glimmer of light. Nowhere, so far as the eye could range, was there a living creature except here in this group of holy buildings. With the going down of the sun, the night wind rose and set about the business of the gods, the dusting of the corners of Earth. As it swept along the valley below, it was trapped by the mountainside and was channeled up through faults in the rock, to emerge into our upper air with a dull moaning boom, like a giant conch calling one to service. Around us there was the creak-

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ing and crackling of rocks moving and contracting now that the greater heat of the day had gone. Above us the stars were vivid in the dark night sky. The Old People used to say that Kesar's Legions had dropped their spears on the Floor of Heaven at the call of Buddha, and the stars were but the reflections of the lights of the Heavenly Room shining through the holes.

Suddenly a new sound was heard above the noise of the rising wind, the temple trumpets sounding the close of yet another day. Up on the roof, as I looked I could dimly discern the silhouettes of monks, their robes fluttering in the breeze as they carried out their priestly office. For us, the trumpets' call meant bedtime until midnight. Dotted around the halls and temples were little groups of monks discussing the affairs of Lhasa and of the world beyond.

Discussing our beloved Dalai Lama, the greatest Incarnation of any Dalai Lama. At the sound of the Close of Day they slowly dispersed and went their separate ways to bed. Gradually the living sounds of the lamasery ceased, and there was the atmosphere of peace. I lay on my back, gazing up through a small window. For this night I was too interested to sleep or to want to sleep. The stars above, and my whole life ahead. So much of it I knew, those things which had been predicted. So much had not been said. The predictions about Tibet, why, why did we have to be invaded?

What had we done, a peace-loving country with no ambition other than to develop spiritually? Why did other nations covet our land? We desired nothing but that which was ours; why, then, did other people want to conquer and enslave us? All we wanted was to be left alone, to follow our own Way of Life. And I was expected to go among those who later would invade us, heal their sick, and help their wounded in a war which had not yet even started. I knew the predictions, knew the incidents and highlights, yet I had to go on like a yak upon the trail, knowing all the stops and halting-places, knowing where the grazing was bad, yet having to plod on to a known destination. But maybe a yak coming over the Ridge of Reverential Prostration thought it worth while when the first sight of the Holy City was... .

The booming of the temple drums woke me with a start. I did not even know that I had been asleep! With an unpriestly thought in my mind I tottered to my feet, reaching with sleep-numbed hands for an elusive robe. Midnight? I shall never stay awake, hope I don't fall over the steps. Oh! How cold this place is! Two hundred and fifty-three rules to obey as a lama? Well, there is one of them broken, for I did excel myself with the violence of my thoughts in being so abruptly awakened. Out I stumbled, to join those others, also in a daze, who had arrived that day. Into the temple we went, to join in the chant and counter-chant of the service.

It has been asked: "Well, if you knew all the pitfalls and hardships which had been predicted, why could you not avoid them?" The most obvious answer to that is: "If I could have avoided the predictions, then the mere fact of avoidance would have proven them false!" Predictions are probabilities, they do not mean that Man has no free will. Far from it. A man may want to go from Darjeeling to Washington. He knows his starting-point and his destination. If he takes the trouble to consult a map, he will see certain places through



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which he would ordinarily pass to reach his destination. While it is possible to avoid the "certain places" it is not always wise to do so, the journey may be longer or more expensive as a result. Similarly, one may motor from London to Inverness. The wise driver consults a map and has a route itinerary from one of the motoring organizations. In so doing the driver can avoid bad roads or, where he cannot avoid rough surfaces, he can be prepared and can drive more slowly. So with predictions.

It does not always pay to take the soft and easy way. As a Buddhist, I believe in reincarnation; I believe that we come to Earth to learn. When one is at school it all seems very hard and bitter. The lessons, history, geography, arithmetic, whatever they may be, are dull, unnecessary and pointless. So it appears to us at school. When we leave we may possibly sigh for the good old school. We may be so proud of it that we wear a badge, a tie, or even a distinctive colour on a monk's robe. So with life. It is hard, bitter, and the lessons we have to learn are designed to try us and no one else. But when we leave school, of this Earth, perhaps we wear our school badge with pride. Certainly I hope to wear my halo with a jaunty air later! Shocked? No Buddhist would be. Dying is merely leaving our old, empty case, and being reborn into a better world.

With the morning light we were up and anxious to explore. The older men were wanting to meet those they had missed the night before. I wanted more than anything to see these huge man-lifting kites I had heard so much about. First we had to be shown over the lamasery so that we should know our way about. Up on the high roof we looked about at the towering peaks, and gazed down at the fearsome ravines. Far away I could see a turgid stream of yellow, laden with waterborne clay. Nearer, the streams were the blue of the sky and rippling. In quiet moments I could hear the happy tinkling of a little brook behind us as it made its swift way down the mountainside, eager to be off and join the tumbling waters of other rivers which, in India, would become the mighty Brahmaputra River, later to join the sacred Ganges and flow into the Bay of Bengal. The sun was rising above the mountains, and the chill of the air fast vanished. Far away we could see a lone vulture swooping in search of a morning meal. By my side a respectful lama pointed out features of interest. "Respectful", because I was a ward of the well-loved Mingyar Dondup, and respectful, too, because I had the "Third Eye" and was a Proved Incarnation, or Trulku, as we term it.

It may possibly interest some to give brief details of recognizing an incarnation. The parents of a boy may, from his behavior, think that he has more knowledge than usual, or is in possession of certain "memories" which cannot be explained by normal means. The parents will approach the abbot of a local lamasery to appoint a commission to examine the boy. Preliminary prelife horoscopes are made, and the boy is physically examined for certain signs on the body. He should, for example, have certain peculiar marks on the hands, on the shoulder blades, and on the legs. If these signs are to be seen, search is made for some clue as to who the boy was in his previous life. It may be that a group of lamas can recognize him (as in my case), and in such event some of his last-life possessions will be available. These are produced, together with others which are in appearance identical, and the boy has to recognize all the articles, perhaps nine, which were his in a previous life. He should be able to do this when he is three years of age.

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At three years of age a boy is considered to be too young to be influenced by his parents' previous description of the articles. If the boy is younger, so much the better. Actually, it does not matter in the least if parents do try to tell the boy how to act. They are not present during the time of choosing, and the boy has to pick perhaps nine articles from possibly thirty. Two wrongly selected make a failure. If the boy is successful, then he is brought up as a Previous Incarnation, and his education is forced. At his seventh birthday predictions of his future are read, and at that age he is deemed well able to understand everything said and implied. From my own experience I know that he does understand!

The "respectful" lama at my side no doubt had all this in mind as he pointed out the features of the district. Over there, to the right of the waterfall, was a very suitable place for gathering Noil-me-tangere, the juice of which is used to remove corns and warts, and to alleviate dropsy and jaundice. Over there, in that little lake, one could gather *Polygorum Hydropiper*, a weed with drooping spikes and pink flowers which grows under water.

We used the leaves for curing rheumatic pains and for relief of cholera. Here we gathered the ordinary type of herbs, only the highlands would supply rare plants. Some people are interested in herbs, so here are details of some of our more common types, and the uses to which we put them. The English names, if any, are quite unknown to me, so I will give the Latin names.

*Allium sativum* is a very good antiseptic, it is also much used for asthma and other chest complaints. Another good antiseptic, used in small doses only, is *Balsamodendron myrrha*. This was used particularly for the gums and mucous membranes. Taken internally it allays hysteria. A tall plant with creamcoloured flowers had a juice which thoroughly discouraged insects from biting. The Latin name for the plant is *Beconia cordata*. Perhaps the insects knew that, and it was the name which frightened them off! We also had a plant which was used to dilate the pupils of the eye. *Ephedra sinica* has an action similar to atropine, and it is also very useful in cases of low blood pressure besides being one of the greatest cures in Tibet for asthma. We used the dried and powdered branches and roots. Cholera often was unpleasant to the patient and doctor because of the odour of ulcerated surfaces. *Ligusticum levisticum* killed all odour. A special note for the ladies: the Chinese use the petals of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* to blacken both eyebrows and shoe leather!

We use a lotion made from the boiled leaves to cool the body of feverish patients. Again for the ladies, *Lilium tigrinum* really cures ovarian neuralgia, while *Flacourtia indica* provides leaves which assist women to overcome most others of their "peculiar" complaints.

In the Sumachs *Rhus* group, the *vernifera* provides the Chinese and Japanese with "Chinese" lacquer. We used the *glabra* for the relief of diabetes, while the *aromatica* is of help in the cases of skin disease, urinary complaints, and cystitis. Another really powerful astringent for use in bladder ulceration was made from the leaves of *Arctostaphylos uva ursi*. The Chinese prefer *Bignonia grandiflora*, from the flowers of which they make an astringent for general use. In later years, in prison camps, I found that *Polygonum*

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bistorta was very useful indeed in treating cases of chromatic dysentery, for which we used it in Tibet.

Ladies who had loved unwisely, but well, often made use of the astringent prepared from *Polygonum erectum*. A very useful method of securing abortion. For others who had been burned, we could apply a "new skin". *Siegesbeckia orientalis* is a tall plant, some four feet high. The flowers are yellow. The juice applied to wounds and burns forms a new skin in much the same way as collodion. Taken internally, the juice had an action similar to camomile. We used to coagulate the blood of wounds with *Piper augustifolium*. The underside of the heart-shaped leaves is most efficient for the purpose. All these are very common herbs, most of the others have no Latin names, because they are not known to the Western world which bestows these designations. I mention them here merely to indicate that we had some knowledge of herbal medicine.

From our vantage-point, looking out over the countryside, we could see, on this bright, sunlit day, the valleys and sheltered places where all these plants grew. Farther out, as we gazed beyond this small area, we could see the land becoming more and more desolate. I was told that the other side of the peak upon whose side the lamasery nestled, was truly an arid region. All this I should be able to see for myself when later in the week I soared high above in a man-lifting kite.

Later in the morning the Lama Mingyar Dondup called for me and said: "Come along, Lobsang, we will go with the others who are about to inspect the kite-launching site. This should be your Big Day!" It needed no further remarks to get me to my feet, eager to be off. Down at the main entrance a group of red-robed monks waited for us, and together we walked down the steps and along the draughty tableland.

There was not much vegetation up here, the ground was of beaten earth over a solid rock shelf. A few sparse bushes clung to the side of the rock as if afraid of sliding over the edge and down into the ravine below. Up above us, on the roof of the lamasery, prayer-flags were held stiff and rigid by the wind, every now and then the masts creaked and groaned with the strain as they had done for ages past, and held. Near by, a small novice idly scuffed the earth with his boot, and the force of the breeze whipped away the dust like a puff of smoke. We walked towards one rocky edge of the long tableland, the edge from which the peak soared up in a gentle slope. Our robes were pressed tight against our backs, and billowed out in front, pushing us, making it difficult not to break into a run.

About twenty or thirty feet from the edge was a crevice in the ground. From it the wind shot with gale force, sometimes projecting small stones and bits of lichen into the air like speeding arrows. Wind sweeping along the valley far below was trapped by the rock formations and, piling up with no easier mode of exit, poured up at high pressure through the fault in the rock, finally to emerge at the tableland with a shriek of power at being free again. Sometimes, during the season of gales, we were told, the noise was like the roaring of demons escaping from the deepest pit and ravening for victims. Wind surging and gusting in the ravine far below altered the pressure in the fault and the note rose and fell accordingly.

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But now, on this morning, the current of air was constant. I could well believe the tales that were told of small boys walking into the blast and being blown straight off their feet, up into the air, to fall perhaps two thousand feet down to the rocks at the base of the crevice. It was a very useful spot from which to launch a kite, though, because the force was such that a kite would be able to rise straight up. We were shown this, with small kites similar to those I used to fly when I was a small boy at home. It was most surprising to hold the string and find one's arm lifted strongly by even the smallest toy kite.

We were led along the whole rocky shelf, and the very experienced men with us pointed out dangers to avoid, peaks which were known to have a treacherous downdraught of air, or those which seemed to attract one sideways. We were told that each monk who flew must carry a stone with him to which was attached a silk khata inscribed with prayers to the Gods of the Air to bless this, a newcomer to their domain. This stone had to be cast "to the winds" when one was of sufficient height. Then the "Gods of the Winds" would read the prayer as the cloth unrolled and streamed out and—so it was hoped—they would protect the kite-rider from all harm.

Back in the lamasery, there was much scurrying about as we carried out the materials with which to assemble the kites. Everything was carefully inspected. The spruce-wood poles were examined inch by inch to make certain that they were free from flaws or other damage. The silk with which the kites were to be covered was unrolled upon a smooth clean floor. Monks on hands and knees crept about in order carefully to test and view every square foot. With the examiners satisfied, the framework was lashed into position and little retaining wedges rammed home. This kite was of box form, about eight feet square and about ten feet long. Wings extended eight or nine feet from the two "horizontal" sides. Beneath the tips there had to be fixed bamboo half-hoops to act as skids and to protect the wings when taking off and landing. At the "floor" of the kite, which was strengthened, there was a long bamboo skid which tapered upwards like our Tibetan boots.

This particular pole was as thick as my wrist and was strutted so that even with the kite at rest, there was no ground touching the silk, the skid and wing-protectors preventing it. I was not at all happy at first sight of the rope of yak hair. It looked flimsy. A vee of it was fastened to the wing-roots and reached to just in front of the skid. Two monks picked up the kite and carried it to the end of the flat tableland. It was quite a struggle lifting it over the updraught of air, and many monks had to hold it and carry it across.

First there was to be a trial; for this we were going to hold the rope and pull instead of using horses. A party of monks held the rope, and the Kite Master watched carefully. At his signal they ran as fast as they could, dragging the kite with them. It hit the airstream from the fissure in the rock, and up into the air it leapt like a huge bird. The monks handling the rope were very experienced, and they soon paid out rope so that the kite could rise higher and higher. They held the line firmly, and one monk, tucking his robe around his waist, climbed the rope for about ten feet to test the lifting-power. Another followed him, and the two moved up so that a third man could try. The airlift was enough to support two grown men and one boy, but not quite enough for three men. This was not good enough for the Kite Master, so the monks hauled in the rope, making very sure that the

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kite avoided the rising air-currents. We all moved from the landing-area, except for the monks on the rope and two more to steady the kite as it landed. Down it came, seemingly reluctant to come to earth after having the freedom of the skies. With a soft "shissh" it slid to a standstill, with the two monks holding the wing-tips.

Under the instruction of the Kite Master we tightened the silk everywhere, driving little wooden wedges into the split poles to hold it firmly. The wings were taken off and replaced at a somewhat different angle, and the kite was tried again. This time it supported three grown men with ease, and almost lifted the small boy as well. The Kite Master said that it was satisfactory and now we could try the kite with a man-weight stone attached.

Once again the crowd of monks struggled to hold down the kite as it went across the updraught. Once again monks pulled on the rope, and up into the air jumped kite and stone. The air was turbulent, and the kite bobbed and swayed. It did queer things to my stomach as I watched and thought of being up there. The kite was brought down, and carried across to the starting-point. An experienced lama spoke to me: "I will go up first, then it will be your turn. Watch me carefully." He led me to the skid: "Observe how I put my feet here on this wood. Link both arms over this crossbar behind you. When you are airborne step down into the vee and sit on this thickened part of the rope. As you land, when you are eight to ten feet in the air, jump. It is the safest way. Now I will fly and you can watch."

This time the horses had been hitched to the rope. As the lama gave the signal, the horses were urged forward at a gallop, the kite slid forward, hit the updraught and leapt into the air. When it was a hundred feet above us, and two or three thousand feet above the rocks below, the lama slid down the rope to the vee, where he sat swaying. Higher and higher he went, a group of monks pulling on the rope and paying it out so that height could be gained. Then the lama above kicked hard on the rope as a signal, and the men began hauling in. Gradually it came lower and lower, swaying and twisting as kites will. Twenty feet, ten feet, and the lama was hanging by his hands. He let go, and as he hit ground he turned a somersault and so regained his feet. Dusting his robe with his hands, he turned to me and said: "Now it is your turn, Lobsang. Show us what you can do."

Now the time had arrived, I really did not think so much of kite-flying. Stupid idea, I thought. Dangerous. What a way to end a promising career. This is where I go back to prayers and herbs. But then I consoled myself, but only very slightly, by thoughts of the prediction in my case. If I was killed, the astrologers would be wrong, and they were never that wrong! The kite was now back at the starting-point, and I walked towards it with legs that were not as steady as I wished. To tell the truth, they were not steady at all! Nor did my voice carry the ring of conviction as I stood up on the skid, linked my arms behind the bar—I could only just reach—and said: "I'm ready." Never had I been more unready. Time seemed to stand still. The rope tightened with agonizing slowness as the horses galloped forward. A faint tremor through the framework, and suddenly a sickening lurch which almost threw me off.



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“My last moment on Earth,” I thought, so closed my eyes, as there was no point in looking any more. Horrible swayings and bobbings did unpleasant things to my stomach. “Ah! A bad takeoff into the astral,” I thought. So I cautiously opened my eyes. Shock made me close them again. I was a hundred feet or more in the air. Renewed protests from my stomach made me fear imminent gastric disturbance, so I once again opened my eyes to be sure of my exact location in case of need. With my eyes open, the view was so superb that I forgot my distress and have never suffered from it since! The kite was bobbing and tipping, swaying, and rising; rising ever higher. Far away over the brow of the mountain I could see the khaki earth fissured with the unhealing wounds of Time. Nearer, there were the mountain ranges bearing the gaping scars of rock falls, some half hidden by the kindly lichen. Far, far away, the late sunlight was touching a distant lake and turning the waters to liquid gold. Above me the graceful bob and curtsy of the kite on the vagrant wind-eddies made me think of the gods at play in the heavens, while we poor Earthbound mortals had to scrabble and struggle to stay alive, so that we could learn our lessons and finally depart in peace.

A violent heave and lurch made me think I had left my stomach hanging on the peak. I looked down, for the first time. Little red-brown dots were monks. They were growing larger. I was being hauled down. A few thousand feet lower, the little stream in the ravine went bubbling on its way. I had been, for the first time, a thousand feet or more above the Earth. The little stream was even more important; it would continue, and grow, and eventually help to swell the Bay of Bengal miles and miles away. Pilgrims would drink of its sacred waters, but now, I soared above its birthplace and felt as one with the gods.

Now the kite was swaying madly, so they pulled more quickly to steady it. I suddenly remembered that I had forgotten to slide down to the vee! All the time I had been standing on the skid. Unhooking my arms, I dropped to a sitting position, put my crossed legs and arms round the rope and slid. I hit the vee with a jerk that almost threatened to cut me in half. By that time the ground was about twenty feet away, I wasted no more time, but grasped the rope with my hands, and as the kite came into about eight feet, let go and turned a somersault in a “breakfall” as I landed.

“Young man,” said the Kite Master, “that was a good performance. You did well to remember and reach the vee, it would have cost you two broken legs otherwise. Now we will let some of the others try, and then you can go up again.”

The next one to go up, a young monk, did better than I, he remembered to slide to the vee without delay. But when the poor fellow came to land, he alighted perfectly, and then fell flat on his face, clutching the ground, his face a greenish tinge, and was well and truly airsick. The third monk to fly was rather cocksure, he was not popular because of his continual boasting. He had been on the trip for three years past, and considered himself the best “airman” ever. Up he went in the air, perhaps five hundred feet up. Instead of sliding down to the vee, he straightened up, climbed inside the box kite, missed his footing and fell out of the tail end: one hand caught on the back cross-strut, and for seconds he hung by one hand. We saw his other hand flailing vainly trying to get a grip, then the kite bobbed, and he lost his hold and went tumbling end over end down the

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rocks five thousand feet below, his robe whipping and fluttering like a blood-red cloud.

The proceedings were a little dampened by this occurrence, but not enough to stop flying. The kite was hauled down and examined to see if it had sustained any damage: then I went up again. This time I slid down to the vee as soon as the kite was a hundred feet in the air. Below me I could see a party of monks climbing down the mountainside to recover the body sprawled in a pulpy red mess across a rock. I looked up, and thought that a man standing in the box of the kite would be able to move position and alter the lift a little. I remembered the incident of the peasant's roof and the yak dung, and how I had gained lift by pulling on the kite string. "I must discuss it with my Guide," I thought.

At that moment there was a sickening sensation of falling, so fast and so unexpected that I almost let go. Down below the monks were hauling frantically on the rope. With the approach of evening, and the cooling of the rocks, the wind in the valley had become less, and the updraught from the funnel had almost stopped. There was little lift now, as I jumped at ten feet the kite gave one last lurch and tipped over on to me. I sat there on the rocky ground, with my head through the silk bottom of the kite box. I sat so still, so deep in thought, that the others imagined that I was injured. The Lama Mingyar Dondup rushed across.

"If we had a strut across here," I said, "we should be able to stand on it and slightly alter the angle of the box, then we should have a little control over the lift."

The Kite Master had heard me. "Yes, young man, you are right, but who would try it out?"

"I would", I replied. "If my guide would permit me."

Another lama turned to me with a smile, "You are a lama in your own right, Lobsang, you do not have to ask anyone now."

"Oh yes I do," was my response. "The Lama Mingyar Dondup taught me all I know, and is teaching me all the time, so it is for him to say."

The Kite Master supervised the removal of the kite, then took me to his own room. Here he had small models of various kites. One was a long thing which somewhat resembled an elongated bird. "We pushed the full-size one off the cliff many years ago; a man was in it. He flew for nearly twenty miles and then hit the side of a mountain. We have not done anything with this type since. Now here is a kite such as you envisage. A strut across here, and a holding bar there. We have one already made, the woodwork is already finished, it is in the little disused store at the far end of the block. I have not been able to get anyone to try it, and I am a little overweight." As he was about three hundred pounds in weight, this was an almost classic understatement.

The Lama Mingyar Dondup had entered during the discussion. Now he said: "We will do a horoscope tonight, Lobsang, and see what the stars say about it "

The booming of the drums awakened us for the midnight service. As I was taking my place, a huge figure sidled up, looming like a small mountain out of the incense cloud. It was the Kite Master. "Did you do it ?" he whispered.

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“Yes,” I whispered back, “I can fly it the day after tomorrow.”

“Good,” he muttered, “it will be ready.”

Here in the temple, with the flickering butter-lamps, and the sacred figures around the walls, it was difficult to think of the foolish monk who had fallen out of his present life. If he had not been showing off, I might not have thought of trying to stand inside the kite body and to some extent control the lift. Here, inside the body of this temple, with the walls so brilliantly painted with holy pictures, we sat in the lotus style, each of us like a living statue of the Lord Buddha. Our seats were the square cushions two high, and they raised us some ten or twelve inches above the floor. We sat in double rows, each two rows facing each other. Our normal service came first, the Leader of the Chants, chosen for his musical knowledge and deep voice, sang the first passages; at the end of each, his voice sank lower and lower until his lungs were emptied of air. We droned the responses, certain passages of which were marked by the beating of the drums, or the ringing of our sweet-toned bells. We had to be extremely careful of our articulation, as we believed that the discipline of a lamasery can be gauged by the clarity of its singing, and the accuracy of the music. Tibetan written music would be difficult for a Westerner to follow: it consists of curves. We draw the rise and fall of the voice. This is the “basic curve”. Those who wish to improvise, add their “improvements” in the form of smaller curves with the large. With the ordinary service ended, we were allowed ten minutes’ rest before beginning the Service for the Dead for the monk who had passed from the world that day.

We assembled again on the given signal. The Leader on his raised throne intoned a passage from the Bardo Thodol, the Tibetan Book of the Dead. “O! Wandering ghost of the monk Kumphel-la-la who this day fell from the life of this world. Wander not among us, for you have departed from us this day. O! Wandering ghost of the monk Kumphel-la, we light this stick of incense to guide you that you may receive instruction as to your path through the Lost Lands and on to the Greater Reality.”

We would chant invitations to the ghost to come and receive enlightenment and guidance, we younger men in our high voices, and the older monks, growling the responses in very deep bass tones. Monks and lamas sitting in the main body of the hall in rows, facing each other, raising and lowering religious symbols in age-old ritual.

“O! Wandering ghost, come to us that you may be guided. You see not our faces, smell not our incense, wherefor you are dead. Come! That you may be guided!”

The orchestra of woodwind, drums, conches, and cymbals filled in our pauses. A human skull, inverted, was filled with red water to simulate blood, and was passed round for each monk to touch. “Your blood has spilled upon the earth, O monk who is but a wandering ghost, come that you may be freed.” Rice grains, dyed a bright saffron, were cast to the east, to the west, to the north and to the south. “Where does wandering ghost roam? To the east? Or the north? To the west? Or to the south? Food of the gods is cast to the corners of the Earth, and you eat it not, wherefore you are dead. Come, O wandering ghost that you may be freed and guided.”

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The deep bass drum throbbed with the rhythm of life itself, with the ordinary, deep-felt “ticking” of the human body. Other instruments broke in with all the sounds of the body. The faint rushing of the blood through veins and arteries, the muted whisper of breath in the lungs, the gurgling of body fluids on the move, the various creakings, squeaks, and rumbles which make the music of life itself. All the faint noises of humanity. Starting off in ordinary tempo, a frightened scream from a trumpet, and the increased beat of the heart-sound. A soggy “thwack”, and the sudden halting of noise. The end of life, a life violently terminated.

“O! monk that was, hanging ghost that is, our telepaths will guide you. Fear not, but lay bare your mind. Receive our teachings that we may free you. There is no death, wandering ghost, but only the life unending. Death is birth, and we call to free you for a new life.”

Throughout centuries we Tibetans have developed the science of sounds. We know all the sounds of the body and can reproduce them clearly. Once heard they are never forgotten. Have you ever laid your head upon a pillow, at the verge of sleep, and heard the beating of your heart, the breathing of your lungs? In the Lamasery of the State Oracle they put the medium into a trance, using some of these sounds, and he is entered by a spirit. The soldier Younghusband, who was the head of the British Forces, invading Lhasa in 1904, testified to the power of these sounds, and to the fact that the Oracle actually changed appearance when in trance.

With the ending of the service we hurried back to our sleep. With the excitement of flying, and the very different air, I was almost asleep on my feet.

When the morning came the Kite Master sent me a message that he would be working on the “controllable” kite, and inviting me to join him. With my Guide, I went to his workshop which he had fitted up in the old storeroom. Piles of foreign woods littered the floor, and the walls had many diagrams of kites. The special model which I was going to use was suspended from the vaulted roof. To my astonishment, the Kite Master pulled on a rope, and the kite came down to floor level—it was suspended on some sort of a pulley arrangement. At his invitation I climbed in. The floor of the box part had many struts upon which one could stand, and a crossbar at waist level afforded a satisfactory barrier to which one could cling. We examined the kite, every inch of it. The silk was removed, and the Kite Master said that he was going to cover it with new silk himself. The wings at the sides were not straight, as on the other machine, but were curved, like a cupped hand held palm down: they were about ten feet long and I had the impression that there would be very good lifting-power.

The next day the machine was carried out into the open, and the monks had a struggle to hold it down when carrying it across the crevice with the strong updraught of air. Finally they placed it in position and I, very conscious of my importance, clambered into the box part. This time monks were going to launch the kite instead of using horses as was more usual: it was considered that monks could exercise more control. Satisfied, I called out: “Tradri, them pa,” (ready, pull). Then as the first tremor ran through the frame, I shouted: “O-na-doal” (good-bye!). A sudden jolt, and the machine shot up like an ar-

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row. A good thing I was hanging on thoroughly, I thought, or they would be searching for my wandering ghost tonight, and I'm quite satisfied with this body for a little longer. The monks below played with the rope, managed it skillfully, and the kite rose higher and higher. I threw out the stone with the prayer to the Wind Gods, and it just missed a monk far below: we were later able to use that cloth again as it fell at the monk's feet. Down below the Kite Master was dancing with impatience for me to start my testing, so I thought I had better get on with it. Cautiously moving around I found that I could very considerably alter the performance, the "lift" and "attitude" of the kite.

I grew careless and too confident. I moved to the back of the box and the kite fell like a stone.

My feet slipped from the bar and I was hanging straight down by my hands, at arms' length. By great efforts, with my robe whipping and flapping around my head, I managed to draw myself up and climb to the normal position. The fall stopped, and the kite surged upwards. By then I had got my head free of my robe and I looked out. If I had not been a shaven-headed lama my hair would have stood straight on end: I was less than two hundred feet above the ground. Later, when I landed, they said I had come to fifty feet before the kite's fall was checked, and it again rose.

For a time I clung to the bar, panting and gasping with the exertion in the thin air. As I looked about over the miles and miles of countryside, I saw in the far distance something that looked like a dotted line moving along. For a moment I stared uncomprehendingly, then it dawned upon me. Of course! It was the rest of the herb-gathering party making their slow way across the desolate country. They were strung out, big dots, little dots, and long dots. Men, boys, and animals, I thought. So slowly they moved, so painfully hesitant their progress. It gave me much pleasure, upon landing, to say that the party would be with us within a day or so.

It was truly fascinating to look about over the cold blue-grey of the rocks, and the warm red ochre of the earth and see lakes shimmering in the far distance. Down below, in the ravine, where it was warmed and sheltered from the bitter winds, mosses, lichens, and plants made a carpet work which reminded me of that in my father's study. Across it ran the little stream which sang to me in the night. Ran across it, yes, and that, too, reminded me—painfully—of the time when I upset a jar of clear water over father's carpet! Yes, my father certainly had a very heavy hand!

The country at the back of the lamasery was mountainous, peak after peak rising in their serried ranks until, against the far-distant skyline they stood outlined blackly against the sunlight. The sky in Tibet is the clearest in the world; one can see as far as the mountains will permit, and there are no heat-hazes to cause distortion. So far as I could see, nothing moved in the whole vast distance except the monks below me, and those scarcely-recognizable dots toiling interminably towards us. Perhaps they could see me here. But now the kite began to jerk; the monks were hauling me down. With infinite care they pulled so as to avoid damaging the valuable experimental machine.

On the ground, the Kite Master looked on me with fond affection, and put his mighty arms around my shoulders with such enthusiasm that I was sure that every bone was



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crushed. No one else could get a word in, for years he had had “theories,” but could not put them to the test, his immense bulk made it impossible for him to fly. As I kept telling him, when he paused for breath, I liked doing it, I got as much pleasure out of flying as he did from designing, experimenting, and watching. “Yes, yes, Lobsang, now, if we just move this over to here, and put that strut there. Yes, that will do it. Hmmm, we will take it in and start on it now. And it rocked sideways, you say, when you did this?” So it went on. Fly and alter, fly and alter. And I loved every second of it. No one but I was allowed to fly—or even set foot—in that special kite. Each time I used it there were some modifications, some improvements.

The biggest improvement, I thought, was a strap to hold me in! But the arrival of the rest of the party put a stop to kite-flying for a day or two. We had to organize the newcomers into gathering and packing groups. The less experienced monks were to gather three kinds of plants only, and they were sent to areas where such plants were plentiful. Every group stayed away for seven days, ranging the sources of supply. On the eighth day they returned with the plants, which were spread out on the clean floor of a huge storage room. Very experienced lamas examined every plant to make sure that it was free from blight, and of the right type. Some plants had the petals removed and dried. Others had the roots grated and stored. Yet others, as soon as they were brought in, were crushed between rollers for the juice. This fluid was stored in tightly sealed jars. Seeds, leaves, stems, petals, all were cleaned and packed in leather bags when quite dry. The bags would have the contents noted on the outside, the neck would be twisted to make it watertight, and the leather would be quickly dipped in water and exposed to the strong sunlight. Within a day the leather would have dried as hard as a piece of wood. So hard would a bag become, that to open it the tightly twisted end would have to be knocked off. In the dry air of Tibet, herbs stored in this way would keep for years.

After the first few days I divided my time between herb-gathering and kite-flying. The old Kite Master was a man of much influence and, as he said, in view of the predictions concerning my future, knowledge of machines in the sky were as important as the ability to gather herbs and classify them. For three days a week I flew in the kites. The rest of the time was spent in riding from group to group so that I could learn as much as possible in the shortest time. Often, high above in a kite, I would look out over the now familiar landscape and see the black yak-hide tents of the herb-gatherers. Around them the yaks would be grazing, making up for lost time, the time at the end of the week when they would have to carry in the loads of herbs. Many of these plants were quite well known in most Eastern countries, but others had not been “discovered” by the Western world and so had no Latin names. A knowledge of herbs has been of great use to me, but the knowledge of flying not less so.

We had one more accident: a monk had been watching me rather closely, and when it was his turn to fly, in an ordinary kite, thought that he could do as well as I. High in the air the kite seemed to be acting strangely. We saw that the monk was flinging himself about in an attempt to control the position of the machine. One specially rough lurch, and the kite dipped and tilted sideways. There was a ripping and splintering of wood, and the monk came tumbling out of the side. As he fell he spun head over feet with his

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robe whirling over his head. A rain of articles fell down, tsampa bowl, wooden cup, rosary, and various charms. He would no longer need them. Spinning end over end, he finally disappeared in the ravine. Later, came the sound of the impact. All good things come too quickly to an end.

The days were full of work, hard work, but all too soon our three months' visit drew to a close. This was the first of a number of pleasant visits to the hills, and to the other Tra Yelpe nearer Lhasa. Reluctantly we packed our few belongings. I was given a beautiful model man-lifting kite by the Kite Master which he had made specially for me. On the next day we set off for home. A few of us, as on arriving, did a forced ride, and the main body of monks, acolytes, and pack animals followed on in leisurely manner. We were glad to be back at the Iron Mountain, but sorry indeed to be parted from our new friends and the great freedom of the hills.

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## **CHAPTER THIRTEEN**

### **FIRST VISIT HOME**

We had arrived back in time for the Losgar, or New Year, ceremonies. Everything had to be cleaned, everywhere tidied. On the fifteenth day the Dalai Lama went to the Cathedral for a number of services. With them ended, he came out for his tour of the Barkhor, the ring road which went outside the Jo-Kang and Council Hall, round by the marketplace, and completed the circuit between the big business houses. At this time of the celebrations, the solemnity was being replaced by gaiety. The gods were pleased, and now was the time for pleasure and enjoyment. Huge frameworks, from thirty to forty feet high, supported images made of coloured butter. Some of the frames had “butter pictures” in relief of various scenes from our Sacred Books. The Dalai Lama walked around and examined each one. The most attractive exhibit earned for the lamasery making it the title of the best butter modelers of the year. We of Chakpori were not at all interested in these carnivals, it all seemed rather childish and unamusing to us. Nor were we interested in the other proceedings when riderless horses raced across the Plain of Lhasa in open competition. We were more interested in the giant figures representing characters from our legends. These figures were constructed on a light wooden framework to represent the body, and a very realistic huge head was fitted. Inside the head were butter-lamps which shone through the eyes, and, in flickering, appeared to make the eyes move from side to side. A strong monk on stilts would be inside the frame of the figure, with his eyes giving a very indifferent view through the giant’s midsection. All kinds of unusual accidents would happen to these performers. The poor wretch would put one stilt in a pothole and find that he was balancing on one stilt, or one stilt would perhaps skid on some slippery substance on the road. One of the worst things was when the lamps were jerked loose—and set fire to the whole figure!

Once, in later years, I was persuaded to carry round the figure of Buddha the God of Medicine. It was twenty-five feet high. The flowing robes flapped round my stilted legs, moths flapped around as well, for the garments had been stored. As I jerked along the road, dust was shaken from the folds, and I sneezed and sneezed and sneezed. Every time I did so I felt that I was going to topple over. Every sneeze caused a further jerk, and added to my discomfort by spilling hot butter from the lamps over my shaven and suffer-

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ing pate. The heat was terrible. Swaths of mouldy old clothes, swarms of bewildered moths, and hot butter. Normally butter in a lamp is solid with the exception of a little pool around the wick. Now, in this stifling heat, the whole lot had melted. The little peephole in the midsection of the figure was not in line with my eyes, and I could not let go of the stilts in order to rearrange it.

All I could see was the back of the figure in front of me, and by the way it was hopping about and swaying, the poor wretch inside was having as bad a time as I. However, with the Dalai Lama watching there was nothing to do but to march on, suffocated with cloth and half roasted in butter fat. With the heat and exertion I am sure that I lost pounds of weight that day! A high lama that night said: "Oh, Lobsang, your performance was good, you would be a very excellent comedian!" I certainly did not tell him that the "antics" which amused him so much were entirely involuntary. Most definitely I did not carry a figure again!

Not long after this, I think it may have been five or six months, there was a sudden terrific gale of wind, with flying clouds of dust and grit. I was on the roof of a storehouse being instructed in how to lay sheet gold to make the roof waterproof. The gale caught me and whirled me off the flat roof, to bump first on another roof some twenty feet lower. Another gust caught me and blew me over the edge and over the side of the Iron Mountain and down to the side of the Lingkhör road some three hundred and fifty feet below.

The ground was swampy and I landed with my face in the water. Something snapped, another branch, I thought. Dazedly I tried to lift myself out of the mud, but found that the pain was intense when I tried to move my left arm or shoulder. Somehow I got to my knees, to my feet, and struggled along to the dry road. I felt sick with pain, and I could not think clearly, my sole thought was to get up the mountain as quickly as possible. Blindly I struggled and stumbled along, until, about halfway up, I met a party of monks rushing down to see what had happened to me and to another boy. He had landed on rocks, and so was dead. I was carried up the rest of the way, to the room of my Guide. Quickly he examined me: "Oe, Oe, poor boys, they should not have been sent out in such a gale!" He looked at me: "Well, Lobsang, you have a broken arm and a broken collarbone. We shall have to set them for you. It will hurt, but not more than I can help."

While he was talking, and almost before I knew, he had set the collarbone and bound splinting in place to hold the broken bones. The upper arm was more painful, but soon that, too, was set and splinted. For the rest of that day I did nothing but lie down. With the arrival of the next day, the Lama Mingyar Dondup said, "We cannot let you fall behind in studies, Lobsang, so you and I will study together here. Like all of us you have a certain little dislike of learning new things, so I am going to remove that 'study antagonism' hypnotically." He closed the shutters and the room was in darkness except for the faint light from the altar lamps. From somewhere he took a small box which he stood on a shelf in front of me. I seemed to see bright lights, coloured lights, hands and bars of colour, and then all appeared to end in a silent explosion of brightness.

It must have been many hours later when I awoke. The window was again open, but the purple shadows of night were beginning to fill the valley down below. From the Potala,

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little lights were twinkling in and around the buildings as the evening guard went their rounds making sure that all was secure. I could look across the city where, too, the night life was now commencing. Just then, my Guide came in: "Oh!" he said, "so you have returned to us at last. We thought that you found the astral fields so pleasant that you were staying a while. Now, I suppose—as usual—you are hungry."

As he mentioned it, I realized that I was, definitely. Food was soon brought, and as I ate he talked. "By ordinary laws you should have left the body, but your stars said you would live to die in the Land of the Red Indians (America) in many years' time. They are having a service for the one who did not stay. He was killed on the instant."

It appeared to me that the ones who had passed over were the lucky ones. My own experiences in astral traveling had taught me, that it was very pleasant. But then I reminded myself that we did not really like school, but we had to stay to learn things, and what was life on Earth but a school? A hard one, too! I thought: "Here am I with two broken bones, and I have to go on learning!" For two weeks I had even more intensive teaching than usual; I was told it was to keep my mind from thinking of my broken bones. Now, at the end of the fortnight, they had united, but I was stiff, and both my shoulder and arm were painful. The Lama Mingyar Dondup was reading a letter when I went into his room one morning. He looked up at me as I entered.

"Lobsang," he said, "we have a packet of herbs to go to your Honorable Mother. You can take it tomorrow morning and stay the day."

"I am sure my father would not want to see me," I answered. "He ignored me completely when he passed me on the steps of the Potala."

"Yes, of course he did. He knew that you had just come from the Precious One, he knew that you had been specially favoured, and so he could not speak unless I was with you, because you are now my ward by order of the Precious One Himself." He looked at me, and the corners of his eyes crinkled as he laughed: "Anyhow, your father will not be there tomorrow. He has gone to Gyantse for several days."

In the morning my Guide looked me over and said: "Hmm, you look a little pale, but you are clean and tidy and that should count a lot with a mother! Here is a scarf, don't forget that you are now a lama and must conform to all the Rules. You came here on foot. Today you will ride on one of our best white horses. Take mine, it needs some exercise."

The leather-bag of herbs, handed to me as I left, had been wrapped in a silk scarf as a sign of respect. I looked at it dubiously, wondering how I was going to keep the wretched thing clean. In end I took off the scarf and tucked it into my robe pouch until I was nearer home.

Down the steep hill we went, the white horse and I. Halfway down the horse stopped, turned his head round to get a good look at me. Apparently he did not think much of what he saw, because he gave a loud neigh, and hurried on as if he could not bear the sight of me any longer. I sympathized with him as I had identical opinions about him! In Tibet, the most orthodox lamas ride mules as they are supposed to be sexless affairs. Lamas who are not so finicky ride a male horse or pony. For myself, I preferred to walk if at all



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possible. At the bottom of the hill we turned right. I sighed with relief; the horse agreed with me that we turn right. Probably because one always traverses the Lingkhor road in a clockwise direction for religious reasons. So we turned right and crossed the Drepung-City road to continue along the Lingkhor circuit. Along past the Potala which I thought was not to be compared to our Chakpori for attractiveness, and across the road to India, leaving the Kaling Chu on our left and the Snake Temple on our right. At the entrance to my former home, a little way farther on, servants saw me coming and hastened to swing open the gates. Straight into the courtyard I rode, with a swagger and a hope that I would not fall off. A servant held the horse, fortunately, while I slid off.

Gravely the Steward and I exchanged our ceremonial scarves. "Bless this house and all that be in it, Honourable Medical Lama, Sir!" said the Steward.

"May the Blessing of Buddha, the Pure One, the All-seeing One be upon you and keep your healthy," I replied.

"Honourable Sir, the Mistress of the House commands me lead you to her." So off we went (as if I could not have found my own way!), with me fumbling to wrap up the bag of herbs with the wretched scarf again. Upstairs, into mother's best room.

"I was never allowed here when I was merely a son," I thought. My second thought was to wonder if I should turn and run for it, the room was full of women!

Before I could, my mother came towards me and bowed, "Honourable Sir and Son, my friends are here to hear of your account of the honour conferred upon you by the Precious One."

"Honourable Mother," I replied, "the Rules of my Order prevent me from saying what the Precious One told me. The Lama Mingyar Dondup instructed me to bring you this bag of herbs and to present you with his Scarf of Greeting."

"Honourable Lama and Son, these ladies have traveled far to hear of the events of the Inmost House and of the Precious One within. Does he really read Indian magazines? And is it true that he has a glass which he can look through and see through the walls of a house?"

"Madam," I answered, "I am but a poor Medical Lama who has recently returned from the hills. It is not for such as I to speak of the doings of the Head of our Order. I have come only as messenger."

A young woman came up to me and said: "Don't you remember me? I am Yaso!"

To be truthful, I hardly could recognize her, she had developed so much, and was so ornamental! . . . I had misgivings. Eight, no, nine women were too much of a problem for me. Men, now I knew how to deal with them, but women! They looked at me as if I were a juicy morsel and they hungry wolves on the plains. There was but one course of action: retreat.

"Honourable Mother," I said, "I have delivered my message and now I must return to my duties. I have been ill and have much to do."

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With that, I bowed to them, turned, and made off as fast as I decently could. The Steward had returned to his office, and the groom brought out the horse. "Help me to mount carefully," I said, "for I have recently had an arm and a shoulder broken and cannot manage alone." The groom opened the gate, I rode out just as mother appeared on the balcony and shouted something. The white horse turned left so that we could again travel clockwise along the Lingkhör road. Slowly I rode along. Slowly, as I did not want to get back too quickly.

Past Gyu-po Linga, past Muru Gompa, and along the complete circuit. Once again home, on the Iron Mountain, I went to the Lama Mingyar Dondup. He looked at me: "Why, Lobsang, have all the wandering ghosts chased you around the City? You look shaken!"

"Shaken?" I answered, "shaken? My mother had a batch of women there and they all wanted to know about the Inmost One and what He said to me. I told them the Rules of the Order would not allow me to say. And I made off while I was safe, all those women staring at me! . . ."

My Guide shook and shook with laughter. The more I stared at him in amazement, the more he laughed. "The Precious One wanted to know if you had settled down or if you still had thoughts of home."

Lamaistic life had upset my "social" values, women were strange creatures to me (they still are!), and . . . "But I am home. Oh no, I do not want to return to the House of my Father. The sight of those women, painted, stuff on their hair, and the way they looked at me: as if I were a prize sheep and they butchers from Sho. Screeching voices, and"—I am afraid my voice must have sunk to a whisper—"their astral colours! Dreadful! Oh, Honourable Lama Guide, do not let us discuss it!"

For days I was not allowed to forget it: "Oh, Lobsang, put to flight by a pack of women!" or, "Lobsang, I want you to go to your Honourable Mother, she has a party today and they need entertaining." But after a week I was again told that the Dalai Lama was very, very interested in me, and had arranged for me to be sent home when my mother had one of her numerous social parties. No one ever obstructed the Precious One, we all loved him, not merely as a God on Earth, but as the true Man that he was. His temper was a bit hasty, but so was mine, and he never let personal bias interfere with the duties of the State. Nor did he stay in a temper for more than minutes. He was the Supreme Head of State and Church.

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## **CHAPTER FOURTEEN**

### **USING THE THIRD EYE**

One morning, when I was at peace with the world, and wondering how to fill in an idle half hour before the next service, the Lama Mingyar Dondup came to me. "Let us take a walk, Lobsang. I have a small job for you to do." I jumped to my feet, glad to be going out with my Guide. It did not take us long to get ready, and then we set off. As we were leaving the Temple one of the cats displayed marked affection and we could not leave him until the roaring purr had stopped and the tail started to wag. This was a huge cat, we called him "cat", in Tibetan, of course, and that was shi-mi. Satisfied that his affection was fully reciprocated, he walked solemnly beside us until we were halfway down the mountain. Then, apparently, he remembered that he had left the jewels unguarded, and off he rushed in a very great hurry.

Our temple cats were not for ornament only, they were fierce guardians of the masses of uncut gems strewn around the holy figures. In houses dogs were the guardians, immense mastiffs who would pull a man down and savage him. These dogs could be cowed and driven off. Not so with the cats. Once they attacked, only death could stop them. They were of the type sometimes named "Siamese". Tibet is cold, so these cats were nearly black.

In hot countries, so I have been told, they are white, the temperature affecting the fur colour. Their eyes were blue, and their hind legs were long, giving them a "different" appearance when they walked. Their tails were long and whiplike, and their voices! . . . No cat ever had a voice like these. The volume and range of tones was almost beyond belief.

On duty these cats prowled in the temples, silent-footed and alert, like dark shadows of the night. If anyone tried to reach the jewels, which were otherwise unguarded, a cat would emerge and leap at the man's arm. Unless he let go immediately, another cat would jump, perhaps from the Holy Image, straight at the thief's throat. And those cats had claws twice as long as those of the "average" cat—and they did not let go. Dogs could be beaten off, or perhaps held or poisoned. Not so with the cats. They would put the fiercest mastiffs to flight. Only men who personally knew those cats could approach them when

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they were on duty.

We sauntered on. Down at the road we turned right through the Pargo Kaling and walked on past the village of Sho. On over the turquoise Bridge and right again at the House of Doring. This brought us to the side of the old Chinese Mission. As we walked the Lama Mingyar Dondup talked to me. "A Chinese Mission has arrived, as I told you. Let us have a look at them and see what they are like."

My first impression was a very unfavourable one. Inside the house the men were pacing about arrogantly unpacking boxes and cases. They appeared to have enough weapons to supply a small army. Being a small boy, I could "investigate" in a manner which was quite unsuitable for an older person. I crept through the grounds and silently approached an open window. For a time I stood and watched until one of the men looked up and saw me. He uttered a Chinese oath which threw grave doubts upon my ancestry, but left none whatever about my future. He reached for something, so I withdrew before he could throw it.

On the Lingkhör road again, I said to my Guide: "Oh! How their auras turned red! And they wave knives about so."

For the rest of the way home the Lama Mingyar Dondup was thoughtful. After our supper he said to me: "I have been thinking quite a lot about these Chinese. I am going to suggest to the Precious One that we make use of your special abilities. Do you feel confident that you can watch them through a screen if it can be arranged?"

All I could say was: "If you think I can do it, then I can."

The next day I did not see my Guide at all, but the following day he taught me in the morning and after the midday meal said: "We will take a walk this afternoon, Lobsang. Here is a scarf of the first quality, so you do not need to be a clairvoyant to know where we are going. Ten minutes to get yourself ready and then meet me in my room. I have to go and see the Abbot first."

Once again we set off on the precipitous path down the mountainside. We took a short cut down over the southwest side of our mountain and, after a very short walk, arrived at the Norbu Linga. The Dalai Lama was very fond of this Jewel Park and spent most of his free time there. The Potala was a beautiful place, outside, but inside it was stuffy through insufficient ventilation and too many butter-lamps burning for too long. Much butter had been spilled on the floors throughout the years, and it was not a new experience for a dignified lama to pursue his stately way down a sloping ramp, tread on a lump of butter covered in dust, and arrive at the bottom of the ramp with an "Ulp!" of astonishment, as part of his anatomy hit the stone flooring. The Dalai Lama did not wish to risk being the subject of such an unedifying spectacle, so he stayed at the Norbu Linga whenever possible.

This Jewel Park was surrounded by a stone wall some twelve feet high. The Park is only about a hundred years old. The Palace within had golden turrets and consisted of three buildings which were used for official and state work. An Inner Enclosure, which also had a high wall, was used by the Dalai Lama as a pleasure garden. Some people

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have written that officials were forbidden to enter this enclosure. That definitely is not so. They were forbidden to do any official business within the enclosure. I have been there some thirty times and know it well. It contained a very beautiful artificial lake with two islands, upon which there were two summerhouses. At the northwest corner a wide stone causeway enabled one to reach the islands and the summerhouse on each. The Dalai Lama spent much time on one or other of these islands and spent many hours each day in meditation there. Inside the Park there were barracks which housed some five hundred men who acted as personal bodyguards. It was to this place that the Lama Mingyar Dondup was taking me. This was my first visit. We walked through the very beautiful land and through an ornamental gateway leading to the Inner Enclosure. All manner of birds were pecking food from the ground as we entered, and they took no notice of us, we had to get out of their way! The lake was placid, like a highly polished metal mirror. The stone causeway had been newly whitewashed, and we made our way to the farthest island where the Inmost One was sitting in deep meditation. At our approach he looked up and smiled. We knelt and laid our scarves at his feet and he told us to sit in front of him. He rang a bell for the buttered tea without which no Tibetan could carry out a discussion. While we were waiting for it to be brought, he told me of the various animals he had in the Park and promised that I should see them later.

With the arrival of the tea and the departure of the lama attendant, the Dalai Lama looked at me and said: "Our good friend Mingyar tells me that you do not like the auric colours of this Chinese Delegation. He says that they have many weapons upon their persons. In all the tests, secret and otherwise, upon your Clairvoyance, you have never failed. What is your opinion, of these men?"

This did not make me happy, I did not like telling others—except the Lama Mingyar Dondup— what I saw in the "colours" and what they meant to me. In my reasoning, if a person could not see for himself, then he was not meant to know. But how does one say that to the Head of a State? Particularly to a Head who was not clairvoyant.

To the Dalai Lama my reply was: "Honourable Precious Protector, I am quite unskilled in the reading of foreign auras. I am unworthy to express an opinion."

This reply did not get me anywhere. The Inmost One replied: "As one possessed of special talents, further increased by the Ancient Arts, it is your duty to say. You have been trained to that end. Now say what you saw."

"Honourable Precious Protector, these men have evil intentions. The colours of their auras show treachery." That was all I said.

The Dalai Lama looked satisfied. "Good, you have repeated it as you told Mingyar. You will conceal yourself behind that screen tomorrow, and watch when the Chinese are here. We must be sure. Conceal yourself now, and we will see if you are adequately hidden."

I was not, so attendants were called, and the Chinese lions were shifted slightly that I might be entirely concealed. Lamas came in rehearsal as if they were the visiting delegation. They tried hard to locate my hiding-place. I caught the thought of one: "Ah!



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Promotion for me if I can see him!” But he did not get promotion, as he was looking on the wrong side. Eventually the Inmost One was satisfied, and called me out. He spoke for a few moments and told us to come again tomorrow, as the Chinese Delegation were going to visit him in an attempt to force a treaty upon Tibet. So with that thought before us, we took our leave of the Inmost One and wended our way up the Iron Mountain.

The following day, at about the eleventh hour, we again descended the rocky slope and made our entrance to the Inner Enclosure. The Dalai Lama smiled upon me and said that I must eat—I was ready for that!—before secreting myself. At his order some very palatable food was brought to the Lama Mingyar Dondup and me, comestibles imported from India in tins. I do not know what they were called, I know only that they were a very welcome change from tea, tsampa, and turnip. Well fortified, I was able to face the prospect of several hours’ immobility more cheerfully. Utter immobility was a simple matter to me, and to all lamas; we had to keep still in order to meditate. From a very early age, from seven years of age to be precise, I had been taught to sit motionless for hours on end. A lighted butter-lamp used to be balanced on my head and I had to remain in the lotus attitude until the butter was finished. This could be as long as twelve hours.

So now, three or four hours imposed no hardship. Directly in front of me the Dalai Lama sat in the lotus attitude on his throne six feet above the floor. He, and I, remained motionless. From without the walls came hoarse cries, and many exclamations in Chinese. Afterwards I discovered that the Chinese had had suspicious bulges under their robes, and so had been searched for weapons. Now they were permitted to enter the Inner Enclosure. We saw them coming, being led in by the Household Guards, across the causeway and on to the porch of the Pavilion.

A high lama intoned: “O! Ma-ni pad-me Hum,” and the Chinamen, instead of repeating the same mantra as a courtesy, used the Chinese form: “O-mi-t’o-fo” (meaning: “Hear us, O Amida Buddha!”).

I thought to myself: “Well, Lobsang, your work is easy; they show their true colours.”

As I looked at them from my place of concealment I observed the shimmering of their auras, the opalescent sheen, shot with murky red. The turgid swirling of hate-filled thoughts. Bands and striations of colour, unpleasant colours, not the clear, pure shades of higher thought, but the unwholesome, contaminated hues of those whose life forces are devoted to materialism and evil-doing. They were those of whom we say: “Their speech was fair but their thoughts were foul.”

I also watched the Dalai Lama. His colours indicated sadness, sadness as he remembered the past when he had been to China. All that I saw of the Inmost One I liked, the best Ruler ever of Tibet. He had a temper, quite a hot one, and then his colours did flash red; but history will record that there never was a better Dalai Lama, one who was utterly devoted to his country. Certainly I thought of him with very great affection, second only to the Lama Mingyar Dondup for whom I felt more than affection.

But the interview dragged on to its useless end, useless because these men did not come in friendship, but in enmity. Their one thought was to get their own way and not be

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too particular about the methods they employed. They wanted territories, they wanted to guide the policy of Tibet, and—they wanted gold! This later had been a lure to them for years past. There are hundreds of tons of gold in Tibet, we regard it as a sacred metal. According to our belief, ground is desecrated when gold is mined, so it is left quite untouched. From certain streams one can pick up nuggets which have been washed down from the mountains. In the Chang Tang region I have seen gold on the sides of swift-flowing streams as sand is seen on the banks of ordinary streams. We melt down some of these nuggets, or “sand”, and make temple ornaments, sacred metal for sacred uses. Even butter-lamps are made of gold. Unfortunately, the metal is so soft that ornaments are easily distorted.

Tibet is about eight times the size of the British Isles. Large areas are practically unexplored, but from my own travels with Lama Mingyar Dondup I know there is gold, silver, and uranium. We have never permitted Western peoples to survey—in spite of their fevered attempts!—because of the old legend: “Where the Men of the West go, there goes war!” It should be remembered, when reading of “gold trumpets,” “gold dishes,” “gold-covered lies,” that gold is not a rare metal in Tibet, but a sacred one. Tibet could be one of the great storehouses of the world if mankind would work together in peace instead of so much useless striving for power.

One morning the Lama Mingyar Dondup came in to me where I was copying an old manuscript ready for the carvers.

“Lobsang, you will have to leave that for now. The Precious One has sent for us. We have to go to Norbu Linga and together, unseen; we have to analyze the colour of some foreigner from the Western world. You must hurry to get ready, the Precious One wants to see us first. No scarves, no ceremony, only speed!”

So that was that. I gaped at him for a moment, then jumped to my feet. “A clean robe, Honourable Lama Master, and I am ready.”

It did not take me long to make myself look passably tidy. Together we set off down the hill on foot, the distance was about half a mile. At the bottom of the mountain, just by the spot where I had fallen and broken my bones, we went over a little bridge and reached the Lingkhör road. This we crossed, and reached the gate of the Norbu Linga, or Jewel Park, as it is sometimes translated. The guards were just about to warn us off when they saw that the Lama Mingyar Dondup was with me. Then their attitudes changed completely; we were quickly shown into the Inner Garden where the Dalai Lama was sitting on a veranda. I felt a little foolish, having no scarf to present, and not knowing how to behave without it. The Inmost One looked up with a smile: “Oh! Sit down, Mingyar, and you, too, Lobsang. You have certainly hurried.”

We sat down and waited for him to speak. He meditated for some time, seeming to marshal his thoughts in an orderly array.

“Some time ago,” he said, “the army of the Red Barbarians (the British) invaded our sacred land. I went to India and from thence traveled most extensively. In the Year of the Iron Dog (1910) the Chinese invaded us as a direct result of the British invasion. I again

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went to India and there I met the man whom we are to meet today. I say all this for you, Lobsang, for Mingyar was with me. The British made promises and they were not kept. Now I want to know if this man speaks with one or two tongues. You, Lobsang, will not understand his speech and so will not be influenced by it. From this lattice screen you and another will watch unobserved, your presence will not be known. You will write down your astral-colour impressions as taught by our Guide, who speaks so well of you. Now show him to his place, Mingyar, for he is more used to you than to me and—I do believe—he considers the Lama Mingyar Dondup to be superior to the Dalai Lama!”

Behind the lattice screen I had grown tired of looking about. Tired of watching the birds and the waving of the branches of the trees. Now and then I took surreptitious nibbles at some tsampa which I had with me. Clouds drifted across the sky, and I thought how nice it would be to feel the sway and tremor of a kite beneath me, with the rushing wind whistling through the fabric and thrumming on the rope. Suddenly I jumped as there was a crash.

For a moment I thought that I was in a kite, and had fallen asleep and out! But no, the gate to the Inner Garden had been flung open, and golden-robed lamas of the Household escorted in a most extraordinary sight. I was hard put to keep silent; I wanted to explode with laughter. A man, a tall, thin man. White hair, white face, scanty eyebrows, and deep-sunk eyes. Quite a hard mouth. But his dress! Blue cloth of some sort with a whole row of knobs down the front, shiny knobs. Apparently some very bad tailor had made the clothes, for the collar was so big that it had to be folded over. It was folded over certain patches on the sides, too. I thought that the Westerners must have some symbolic patches; such as those we used in imitation of Buddha. Pockets meant nothing to me in those days, nor did folded collars. In Tibet, those who have no need to do manual work have long sleeves which completely hide the hands. This man had short sleeves, reaching only to his wrists. “Yet he cannot be a labourer,” I thought, “for his hands look too soft. Perhaps he does not know how to dress.”

But this fellow’s robe ended where his legs joined his body. “Poor very poor,” I thought. His trousers were too tight in the leg and too long, for the bottoms were turned up. “He must feel terrible looking like that in front of the Inmost One,” I thought. “I wonder if someone his size will lend him proper clothes.” Then I looked at his feet. Very, very strange. He had some curious black things on them. Shiny things, shiny as if they were covered with ice. Not boots of felt such as we wear, no, I decided that I would never see anything stranger than this. Quite automatically I was writing down the colours, I saw, and making notes of my own interpretation of them. Sometimes the man spoke in Tibetan, quite good for a foreigner, then lapsed into the most remarkable collection of sounds I had ever heard. “English”, as they told me afterwards when I again saw the Dalai Lama.

The man amazed me by reaching into one of the patches at his side and bringing out a piece of white cloth. Before my astounded eyes he put this cloth over his mouth and nose and made it sound like a small trumpet. “Some sort of a salute to the Precious One,” I thought. Salute over, he carefully put away the cloth behind the patch. He fiddled about with other patches and brought out various papers of a type I had not seen before. White,

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thin, smooth paper. Not like ours which was buff, thick, and rough. "How can one possibly write on that?" I thought. "There is nothing to scrape away the crayon, things would just slide off!" The man took from behind one of his patches a thin stick of painted wood with what looked like soot in the middle. With this he made the strangest squiggles I had ever imagined. I thought he could not write and was just pretending to by making these markings.

"Soot? Who ever heard of anyone writing with a streak of soot. Just let him blow on it and see the soot fly off!"

He was obviously a cripple because he had to sit on a wooden framework which rested on four sticks. He sat down on the frame, and let his legs hang over the edge. I thought that his spine must have been damaged, because two more sticks from the frame on which he sat supported it. By now I was feeling really sorry for him: ill-fitting clothes, inability to write, showing off by blowing a trumpet from his pocket, and now, to make it even stranger, he could not sit properly but had to have his back supported and his legs dangling. He fidgeted a lot, crossing and uncrossing his legs.

At one time, to my horror, he tipped the left foot so that the sole pointing at the Dalai Lama, a terrible insult if done by a Tibetan, but he soon remembered and uncrossed his legs again. The Inmost One did great honour to this man, for he also sat on one of these wooden frames and let his legs hang over. The visitor had a most peculiar name, he was called "Female Musical Instrument", and he had two decorations in front of it. Now I should refer to him as "C. A. Bell". By his auric colours I judged him to be in poor health, most probably caused by living in a climate to which he was not suited. He appeared genuine in his desire to be helpful, but it was obvious from his colours that he was afraid of annoying his government and of having his after-work pension affected. He wanted to take one course, but his government was not willing, so he had to say one thing and hope that his opinions and suggestions would be proved correct by time.

We knew a lot about this Mr. Bell. We had all the data, his birth time, and various "highlights" in his career with which one could plot his course of events. The astrologers discovered that he had previously lived in Tibet and had, during his last life, expressed the wish to reincarnate in the West in the hope of assisting in an understanding between East and West. I have recently been given to understand that he mentions this in some book that he has written. Certainly we felt that if he had been able to influence his government in the way he desired there would have been no Communist invasion of my country. However, the forecasts decreed that there would be such an invasion, and the predictions are never wrong.

The English Government seemed to be very suspicious: they thought that Tibet was making treaties with Russia. This did not suit them. England would not make a treaty with Tibet, nor was she willing for Tibet to make friends with anyone else. Sikkin, Bhutan, anywhere but Tibet could have treaties, but not Tibet. So the English became hot under their peculiar collars in an attempt to invade us or strangle us—they did not mind which. This Mr. Bell, who was on the spot, saw that we had no desire to side with any nation; we wanted to stay on our own, to live life in our own way, and keep clear of all dealings with

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foreigners who, in the past, had brought us nothing but trouble, loss, and hardship.

The Inmost One was pleased indeed with my remarks after this Mr. Bell had left. But he thought of me in terms of more work. "Yes, yes!" he exclaimed, "we must develop you even more, Lobsang. You will find it of the utmost use when you go to the Far Countries. We will have you given more hypnotic treatment, we must cram in all the knowledge that we can." He reached for his bell and rang for one of his attendants. "Mingyar Dondup, I want him here, now!" he said. A few minutes later my Guide appeared and made his leisurely way across. Not for anyone would that Lama hurry! And the Dalai Lama knew him as a friend and so did not try to hasten him. My Guide sat beside me, in front of the Precious One. An attendant hurried along with more buttered tea and "things from India" to eat. When we were settled, the Dalai Lama said: "Mingyar, you were correct, he has ability. He can be developed still more, Mingyar, and he must be. Take whatever steps you consider necessary so that he is trained as quickly and as thoroughly as possible. Use any and all of our resources for, as we have been so often warned, evil times will come upon our country, and we must have someone who can compile the Record of the Ancient Arts."

So the tempo of my days were increased. Often, from this time, I was sent for in a hurry to "interpret" the colours of some person, perhaps that of a learned abbot from a far distant lamasery, or a civil leader of some remote province. I became a well-known visitor to the Potala and to the Norbu Linga. In the former I was able to make use of the telescopes which I so enjoyed, particularly one large astronomical model on a heavy tripod. With this, late at night, I would spend hours watching the moon and the stars.

The Lama Mingyar Dondup and I frequently went into Lhasa City to observe visitors. His own considerable powers of clairvoyance, and his wide knowledge of people, enabled him to check and develop my own statements. It was most interesting to go to the stall of a trader and hear the man speak loud in praise of his wares, and compare them with his thoughts, which to us were not so private. My memory, too, was developed, for long hours I listened to involved passages, and then had to say them back. For unknown periods of time I lay in a hypnotic trance while people read to me passages from our oldest Scriptures.



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## **CHAPTER FIFTEEN**

### **THE SECRET NORTH-AND YETIS**

During this time we went to the Chang Tang Highlands. In this book there is no time for more than a brief mention of this region. To do the expedition justice would require several books. The Dalai Lama had blessed each of the fifteen members of the party and we had all set off in high spirits, mounted on mules; mules will go where horses will not. We made our slow way along by Tengri Tso, on to the huge lakes at Zilling Nor, and ever northwards. The slow climb over the Tangla Range, and on into unexplored territory. It is difficult to say how long we took, because time meant nothing to us; there was no reason for us to hurry, we went at our own comfortable speed and saved our strength and energy for later exertions.

As we made our way farther and farther into the Highlands, the ground ever rising, I was reminded of the face of the moon as seen through the large telescope at the Potala. Immense mountain ranges, and deep canyons. Here the vista was the same. The unending, eternal mountains, and crevices which seemed bottomless. We struggled on through this "lunar landscape", finding the conditions becoming harder and harder. At last the mules could go no farther. In the rarefied air they were soon spent and could not manage to cross some of the rocky gorges where we swung dizzily at the end of a yak-hair rope. In the most sheltered spot we could find we left our mules and the five weakest members of the party stayed with them. They were sheltered from the worst blasts of that barren, windswept landscape by a spur of rock which towered upwards like a jagged wolf fang. At the base there was a cave where softer rock had been eroded by time. A precipitous path could be followed which would lead downwards to a valley where there was sparse vegetation on which the mules could feed.

A tinkling stream dashed along the tableland and rushed over the edge of a cliff to fall thousands of feet below, so far below that even the sound of its landing was lost. Here we rested for two days before plodding on higher and higher. Our backs ached with the loads we were carrying, and our lungs felt as if they would burst for want of air. On we went, over crevices and ravines. Over many of them we had to toss iron hooks to which ropes were attached. Toss, and hope that there would be a safe hold at the other side.

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We would take turns to swing the rope with the hook, and take turns to swarm across when a hold was secured. Once across we had another end of rope so that when all the party had negotiated the canyon, the rope also could be brought over by pulling one end. Sometimes we could get no hold. Then one of us would have the rope tied around his waist, and from the highest point we could reach, would try to swing like a pendulum, increasing the momentum with each swing. With one of us across the other side, he would have to clamber up as best he could in order to reach a point where the rope would be roughly horizontal. We all took it in turns to do this, as it was hard and dangerous work. One monk was killed doing it. He had climbed high on our side of a cliff and let himself swing. Apparently he badly misjudged, for he crashed into the opposite wall with terrible force, leaving his face and his brains on the points of the jagged rocks. We hauled the body back, and had a service for him. There was no way of burying the body in solid rock, so we left him for the wind and the rain and the birds. The monk whose turn it now was did not look at all happy, so I went instead. It was obvious to me that in view of the predictions about me, I should be quite safe and my faith was rewarded. My own swing was cautious—in spite of the prediction!—and I reached with scrabbling fingers for the edge of the nearest rock. Only just did I manage to hang on and pull myself up, with the breath rasping my throat, and my heart pounding as if it would explode. For a time I lay, quite spent, then I managed to crawl a painful way up the mountainside. The others, the best companions that anyone could have, swung their other rope to give me the best possible chance of reaching it. With the two ends now in my grasp, I made them secure and called out to them to pull hard and test it. One by one they came over, upside down, hands and feet linked over the rope, robes fluttering in the still breeze, the breeze which impeded us and did not help our breathing at all.

At the top of the cliff we rested a while and made our tea, although at this altitude the boiling-point was low, and the tea did not really warm us. Somewhat less tired now, we again took up our loads and stumbled onwards into the heart of this terrible region. Soon we came to a sheet of ice, a glacier, maybe, and our process became even more difficult. We had no spiked boots, no ice-axes, or mountaineering equipment; our only “equipment” consisted of our ordinary felt boots with the soles bound with hair to afford some grip, and ropes. In passing, Tibetan mythology has a Cold Hell. Warmth is a blessing to us, so the opposite is cold, hence the cold hell. This trip to the Highlands showed me what cold could be!

After three days of this shuffling upwards over the ice-sheet, shivering in the bitter wind and wishing that we had never seen the place, the glacier led us downwards between towering rocks. Down and down we went, fumbling and slipping, down into an unknown depth. Several miles farther on we rounded a shoulder of a mountain and saw before us a dense white fog. From a distance we did not know if it was snow or cloud, it was so white and unbroken. As we approached we saw that it was indeed fog, as tendrils kept breaking away and drifting off.

The Lama Mingyar Dondup, the only one of us who had been here before, smiled with satisfaction: “You do look a cheerless lot! But you will have some pleasure now.”

We saw nothing pleasant before us. Fog. Cold. Frozen ice below our feet and frozen

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sky above our heads. Jagged rocks like the fangs in a wolf's mouth, rocks against which we bruised ourselves. And my Guide said that we were going to have "some pleasure"! On into the cold and clammy fog we went, miserably plodding, we knew not where. Hugging our robes about us for an illusion of warmth. Panting and shuddering with the cold. Farther, and yet farther in. And stopped, petrified with amazement and fright. The fog was becoming warm, the ground was growing hot. Those behind who had not reached so far, and could not see, bumped into us. Recovered somewhat from our stupefaction by the Lama Mingyar Dondup's laughter, we pushed forward again, blindly, reaching out for the man ahead, the one in the lead feeling unseeingly with his out-thrust staff. Below our feet stones threatened to trip us, pebbles rolled beneath our boots. Stones? Pebbles?

Then where was the glacier, the ice? Quite suddenly the fog thinned, and we were through it. One by one we fumbled our way into—well, as I looked about me I thought that I had died of cold and had been transported to the Heavenly Fields. I rubbed my eyes with hot hands; I pinched myself and rapped my knuckles against a rock to see if I was flesh or spirit. But then I looked about: my eight companions were with me. Could we all have been so suddenly transported? And if so, what about the tenth member who had been killed against the rock face? And were we worthy of the heaven I saw before us?

Thirty heartbeats before we had been shivering with cold the other side of the fog-curtain. Now we were on the edge of collapse with the heat! The air shimmered, the ground steamed. A stream at our feet bubbled out of the earth itself, propelled by gouts of steam. About us there was green grass, greener than any I had ever seen before. Broad-leaved grass stood before us more than knee-high. We were dazed and frightened. Here was magic, something quite beyond our experience. Then the Lama Mingyar Dondup spoke: "If I looked like that when I first saw it, then I did look a sight! You fellows look as if you think the Ice Gods are having a sport with you."

We looked about, almost too frightened to move, and then my Guide spoke again: "Let us jump over the stream, jump over, for the water is boiling. A few miles farther and we shall reach a really beautiful spot where we can rest."

He was right, as ever. About three miles on we lay at full length on the moss-covered ground, lay without our robes as we felt as if we were being boiled. Here there were trees such as I had never seen before, and probably never shall see again. Highly coloured flowers bestrewed everything. Climbing vines laced the tree trunks and depended from the branches. Slightly to the right of the pleasant glade in which we rested we could see a small lake and ripples and circles on its surface indicated the presence of life within it. We still felt bewitched, we were sure that we had been overcome with the heat and passed to another plane of existence. Or had we been overcome with the cold? We did not know!

The foliage was luxuriant; now that I have travelled I should say that it was tropical. There were birds of a type even now strange to me. This was volcanic territory. Hot springs bubbled from the ground, and there were sulphurous odours. My Guide told us that there were, to his knowledge, two places only like this in the Highlands. He said that

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the underground heat, and the hot streams, melted the ice, and the high rock walls of the valley trapped the warm air. The dense white fog we had penetrated was the meeting-place of the hot and cold streams. He also told us that he had seen giant animal skeletons, skeletons which, in life, must have supported an animal twenty or thirty feet high. Later I saw bones myself.

Here I had my first sight of a yeti. I was bending picking herbs, when something made me look up. There, within ten yards of me, was this creature that I had heard so much about. Parents in Tibet often threaten naughty children with: "Behave yourself, or a yeti will get you!" Now, I thought, a yeti had got me and I was not happy about it. We looked at each other, both of us frozen with fright for a period which seemed ageless. It was pointing a hand at me, and uttering a curious mewling noise like a kitten. The head seemed to have no frontal lobes, but sloped back almost directly from the very heavy brows. The chin receded greatly and the teeth were large and prominent. Yet the skull capacity appeared similar to that of modern man with the exception of the missing forehead.

The hands and feet were large and splayed. The legs were bowed and the arms were much longer than normal. I observed that the creature walked on the outer side of the feet as humans do. (Apes and others of that order do not walk on the outer surfaces.) As I looked and perhaps jumped with fright, or from some other cause, the yeti screeched, turned, and leaped away. It seemed to make "one-leg" jumps and the result was like giant strides. My own reaction was also to run, in the opposite direction! Later, thinking about it, I came to the conclusion that I must have broken the Tibetan sprint record for altitudes above seventeen thousand feet.

Later we saw a few yetis in the distance. They hastened to hide at sight of us, and we certainly did not provoke them. The Lama Mingyar Dondup told us that these yetis were throwbacks of the human race who had taken a different path in evolution and who could only live in the most secluded places. Quite frequently we heard tales of yetis who had left the Highlands and had been seen leaping and bounding near inhabited regions. There are tales of lone women who have been carried off by male yetis. That may be one way in which they continue their line. Certainly some nuns confirmed this for us later when they told us that one of their Order had been carried off by a yeti in the night. However, on such things I am not competent to write. I can only say that I have seen yeti and baby yetis. I have also seen skeletons of them.

Some people have expressed doubts about the truth of my statements concerning the yetis. People have apparently written books of guesses about them, but none of these authors have seen one, as they admit. I have. A few years ago Marconi was laughed at when he said he was going to send a message by radio across the Atlantic. Western doctors solemnly asserted that Man could not travel at more than fifty miles an hour or they would die through the rush of air. There have been tales about a fish which was said to be a "living fossil." Now scientists have seen them, captured them, dissected them. And if Western Man had his way, our poor old yetis would be captured, dissected and preserved in spirit.

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We believe that yetis have been driven to the Highlands and that elsewhere, except for very infrequent wanderers, they are extinct.

The first sight of one causes fright. The second time one is filled with compassion for these creatures of a bygone age who are doomed to extinction through the strains of modern life. I am prepared, when the Communists are chased out of Tibet, to accompany an expedition of skeptics and show them the yetis in the Highlands. It will be worth it to see the faces of these big business men when confronted with something beyond their commercial experience. They can use oxygen and bearers, I will use old monk's robe. Cameras will prove the truth. We had no photographic equipment in Tibet in those days.

Our old legends relate that centuries ago Tibet had shores washed by the seas. Certain it is that fossils of fish and other marine creatures are to be found if the surface of the earth is disturbed. The Chinese have a similar belief. The Tablet of Yu which formerly stood on the Kou-lou peak of Mount Heng in the province of Hu-pei records that the Great Yu rested upon the site (in 2278 B.C.) after his labour of draining off the "waters of the deluge" which at the time submerged all China except the highest lands.

The original stone has, I believe, been removed, but there are imitations at Wu-ch'ang Fu, a place near Hankow. A further copy is in the Yu-lin temple near Shao-hsing Fu in Chekiang. According to our belief, Tibet was once a low land, by the sea, and for reasons beyond our certain knowledge there were frightful earth-convulsions during which many lands sank beneath the waters, and others rose up as mountains.

The Chang Tang Highlands were rich in fossils, and in evidence that all this area had been a seashore. Giant shells, of vivid colours, curious stone sponges, and ridges of coral were common. Gold, too, was here, lumps of it which could be picked up as easily as could the pebbles. The waters which flowed from the depths of the earth were of all temperatures from boiling gouts of steam to near freezing. It was a land of fantastic contrasts. Here there was a hot, humid atmosphere such as we had never before experienced. A few yards away, just the other side of a fog-curtain, there was the bitter cold that could sap the life and render a body as brittle as glass. The rarest of rare herbs grew here, and for those alone we had made this journey. Fruits were there, too, fruits such as we had never before seen. We tasted them, liked them, and satiated ourselves . . . the penalty was a hard one. During the night and the whole of next day we were too busy to gather herbs. Our stomachs were not used to such food. We left those fruits alone after that!

We loaded ourselves to the limit with herbs and plants, and retraced our footsteps through the fog. The cold on the other side was terrible. Probably all of us felt like turning back and living in the luxuriant valley. One lama was unable to face the cold again. A few hours after passing the fog-curtain he collapsed, and although we camped then in an effort to help him, he was beyond aid, and went to the Heavenly Fields during the night. We did our best—throughout that night we had tried to warm him, lying on each side of him, but the bitter cold of that arid region was too much. He slept, and did not awaken. His load we shared between us, although we had considered before that we were laden



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to the limit. Back over that glittering sheet of age-old ice we retraced our painful steps. Our strength seemed to have been sapped by the comfortable warmth of the hidden valley, and we had insufficient food now. For the last two days of our journey back to the mules we did not eat at all; we had nothing left, not even tea.

With yet a few more miles to go, one of the men in the lead toppled over, and did not rise. Cold, hunger, and hardship had taken one more from among us. And there was still another who had departed. We arrived at the base camp to find four monks waiting for us. Four monks who leapt to their feet to aid us cover the last few yards to this stage. Four. The fifth had ventured out in a gale of wind and had been blown over the edge into the canyon below. By laying face down, and having my feet held so that I could not slip, I saw him lying hundreds of feet below, covered in his blood red robe which was now, literally, blood red.

During the next three days we rested and tried to regain some of our strength. It was not merely tiredness and exhaustion which prevented us from moving, but the wind which shrilled among the rocks, trundling pebbles before it, sending cutting blasts of dust-laden air into our cave. The surface of the little stream was whipped off and blown away like a fine spray. Through the night the gale howled around us like ravening demons lusting for our flesh. From somewhere near came a rushing, and a “crump-crump” followed by an earth-shaking thud. Yet another immense boulder from the mountain ranges had succumbed to the attrition of wind and water and caused a landslide. Early in the morning of the second day, before the first light had reached the valley below, while we were still in the predawn luminescence of the mountains, a huge boulder crashed from the peak above us. We heard it coming and huddled together, making ourselves as small as possible. Down it crashed, as if the Devils were driving their chariots at us from the skies. Down it roared, accompanied by a shower of stones. A horrid crash and trembling as it struck the rocky tableland in front of us. The edge shook and wavered, and some ten or twelve feet of the ledge toppled and broke away. From below quite a time later, came the echo and reverberation of the falling debris. So was our comrade buried.

The weather seemed to be getting worse. We decided that we would leave early on the next morning before we were prevented. Our equipment—such as it was—was carefully overhauled. Ropes were tested, and the mules examined for any sores or cuts. At dawn the next day the weather seemed to be a little calmer. We left with feelings of pleasure at the thought of being homeward bound. Now we were a party of eleven instead of the fifteen who had so cheerfully started out. Day after day we plodded on, foot-sore and weary, our mules bearing their loads of herbs. Our progress was slow. Time had no meaning for us. We toiled on in a daze of fatigue. Now we were on half rations, and constantly hungry.

At last we came in sight of the lakes again, and to our great joy we saw that a caravan of yaks grazed near by. The traders welcomed us, pressed food and tea on us and did all they could to ease our weariness. We were tattered and bruised. Our robes were in rags, and our feet were bleeding where great blisters had burst.

But—we had been to the Chang Tang Highlands and returned—some of us! My Guide

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had now been twice, perhaps the only man in the world to have made two such journeys. The traders looked after us well. Crouched round the yak-dung fire in the dark of the night they wagged their heads in amazement as we told of our experiences. We enjoyed their tales of journeys to India, and of meetings with other traders from the Hindu Kush.

We were sorry to leave these men and wished that they were going in our direction. They had but recently set out from Lhasa; we returning there. So, in the morning, we parted with mutual expressions of good will.

Many monks will not converse with traders, but the Lama Mingyar Dondup taught that all men are equal: race, colour, or creed meant naught. It was a man's intentions and actions only that counted.

Now our strength was renewed, we were going home. The countryside became greener, more fertile, and at last we came in sight of the gleaming gold of the Potala and our own Chakpori, just a little higher than the Peak. Mules are wise animals—ours were in a hurry to get to their own home in Sho, and they pulled so hard that we had difficulty in restraining them. One would have thought that they had been to the Chang Tang—and not us! We climbed the stony road up the Iron Mountain with joy. Joy at being back from Chambala, as we call the frozen north. Now began our round of receptions, but first we had to see the Inmost One. His reaction was illuminating. "You have done what I should like to do, seen what I ardently desire to see. Here I have 'all-power', yet I am a prisoner of my people. The greater the power, the less the freedom: the higher the rank, the more a servant. And I would give it all to see what you have seen."

The Lama Mingyar Dondup, as leader of the expedition, was given the Scarf of Honour, with the red triple knots. I, because I was the youngest member, was similarly honoured. I well knew that an award at "both ends" embraced everything in between! For weeks after we were travelling to other lamaseries, to lecture, to distribute special herbs, and to give me the opportunity of seeing other districts. First we had to visit "The Three Seats", Drepung, Sera, and Ganden. From thence we went farther afield, to Dorje-thag, and to Samye, both on the River Tsangpo, forty miles away. We also visited Samden Lamasery, between the Du-me and Yamdok Lakes, fourteen thousand feet above sea-level. It was a relief to follow the course of our own river, the Kyi Chu. For us it was truly well named, the River of Happiness.

All the time my instruction had been continued while we rode, when we stopped, and when we rested. Now the time of my examination for the Lama degree was near, and so we returned once again to Chakpori in order that I should not be distracted.

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## **CHAPTER SIXTEEN**

### **LAMAHOOD**

A considerable amount of training was now given to me in the art of astral traveling, where the spirit, or ego, leaves the body and remains connected to life on Earth only by the Silver Cord. Many people find it difficult to believe that we travel in this way. Everyone does, when they sleep. Nearly always in the West it is voluntary; in the East lamas can do it when fully conscious. Thus they have a complete memory of what they have done, what they have seen and where they have been. In the West people have lost the art, and so when they return to wakefulness they think they have had a “dream”.

All countries had a knowledge of this astral journeying. In England it is alleged that “witches can fly”. Broomsticks are not necessary, except as a means of rationalizing what people do not want to believe! In the U.S.A. the “Spirits of the Red Men” are said to fly. In all countries, everywhere, there is a buried knowledge of such things. I was taught to do it. So can anyone be. Telepathy is another art which is easy to master. But not if it is going to be used as a stage turn. Fortunately this art is now gaining some recognition. Hypnotism is yet another art of the East. I have carried out major operations on hypnotized patients, such as leg amputations and those of an equally serious nature. The patient feels nothing, suffers nothing, and awakens in better condition through not having to also suffer the effects of the orthodox anesthetics. Now, so I am told, hypnotism is being used to a limited extent in England.

Invisibility is another matter. It is a very good thing that invisibility is beyond more than the very, very few. The principle is easy: the practice is difficult. Think of what attracts you. A noise? A quick movement or a flashing colour? Noises and quick actions rouse people, make them notice one. An immobile person is not so easily seen, nor is a “familiar” type or class of person. The man who brings the mail, often people will say that “no one has been here, no one at all”, yet their mail will have been brought. How, by an invisible man? Or one who is such a familiar sight that he is not “seen”, or perceived. (A policeman is always seen as nearly everyone has a guilty conscience!) To attain a state of invisibility one must suspend action, and also suspend one’s brain waves! If the physical brain is allowed to function (think), any other person near by becomes tele-

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pathically aware (sees) and so the state of invisibility is lost. There are men in Tibet who can become invisible at will, but they are able to shield their brain waves. It is perhaps fortunate that they are so few in number.

Levitation can be accomplished, and sometimes is, solely for the technical exercise involved. It is a clumsy method of moving around. The effort involved is considerable. The real adept uses astral traveling, which is truly a matter of the utmost simplicity—provided one has a good teacher. I had, and I could (and can) do astral traveling. I could not make myself invisible, in spite of my most earnest efforts. It would have been a great blessing to be able to vanish when I was wanted to do something unpleasant, but this was denied me. Nor, as I have said before, was I possessed of musical talents. My singing voice brought down the wrath of the Music Master, but that wrath was as naught to the commotion I caused when I tried to play the cymbals—thinking that anyone could use those things—and quite accidentally caught a poor unfortunate monk on each side of his head. I was advised, unkindly, to stick to clairvoyance and medicine!

We did much of what is termed yoga in the Western world. It is, of course, a very great science and one which can improve a human almost beyond belief. My own personal opinion is that yoga is not suitable for Western people without very considerable modification. The science has been known to us for centuries; we are taught the postures from the very earliest age. Our limbs, skeleton, and muscles are trained to yoga. Western people, perhaps of middle age, who try some of these postures can definitely harm themselves. It is merely my opinion as a Tibetan, but I do feel that unless there is a set of exercises which have been so modified, people should be warned against trying them.

Again, one needs a very good native teacher, one thoroughly trained in male and female anatomy if harm is to be avoided. Not merely the postures can do harm, but the breathing exercises also!

Breathing to a particular pattern is the main secret of many Tibetan phenomena. But here again, unless one has a wise and experienced teacher, such exercises can be extremely harmful, if not fatal. Many travelers have written of “the racing ones,” lamas who can control the weight of the body (not levitation) and race at high speed for hours and hours over the ground, hardly touching the earth in passing. It takes much practice, and the “racer” has to be in a semi-trance state. Evening is the best time, when there are stars upon which to gaze, and the terrain must be monotonous, with nothing to break the semi-trance state. The man who is speeding so is in a condition similar to that of a sleep-walker. He visualizes his destination, keeps it constantly before his Third Eye, and unceasingly recites the appropriate mantra. Hour after hour he will race, and reach his destination untired. This system has only one advantage over astral traveling. When traveling by the latter, one moves in the spirit state and so cannot move material objects; cannot, for example, carry one’s belongings. The arjopa, as one calls the “racer,” can carry his normal load, but he labours under disadvantages in his turn.

Correct breathing enables Tibetan adepts to sit naked on ice, seventeen thousand feet or so above sea-level, and keep hot, so hot that the ice is melted and the adept freely perspires. A digression for a moment: the other day I said that I had done this myself at

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eighteen thousand feet above sea-level. My listener, quite seriously, asked me: "With the tide in, or out?"

Have you ever tried to lift a heavy object when your lungs were empty of air? Try it and you will discover it to be almost impossible. Then fill your lungs as much as you can, hold your breath, and lift with ease. Or you may be frightened, or angry, take a deep breath, as deep as you can, and hold it for ten seconds. Then exhale slowly. Repeat three times at least and you will find that your heartbeats are slowed up and you feel calm. These are things which can be tried by anyone at all without harm. A knowledge of breath control helped me to withstand Japanese tortures and more tortures when I was a prisoner of the Communists. The Japanese at their worst are gentlemen compared to the Communists! I know both, at their worst.

The time had now come when I was to take the actual examination for lamahood. Before this I had to be blessed by the Dalai Lama. Every year he blesses every monk in Tibet, individually, not in bulk as does, for example, the Pope of Rome. The Inmost One touches the majority with a tassel attached to a stick. Those whom he favours, or who are of high rank, he touches on the head with one hand. The highly favoured are blessed by him placing two hands on the person's head. For the first time he placed both hands on me and said in a low voice: "You are doing well, my boy: do even better at your examination. Justify the faith we have placed in you."

Three days before my sixteenth birthday I presented myself for examination together with about fourteen other candidates. The "examination boxes" seemed to be smaller, or perhaps it was that I was bigger. When I lay on the floor, with my feet against one wall, I could touch the other wall with my hands above my head, but my arms had to be bent as there was not enough room to stretch them straight. The boxes were square, and at the front the wall was such that I could just touch the top with my outstretched hands, again with my arms above my head. The back wall was about twice my height. There was no roof, so at least we had ample air! Once again we were searched before entering, and all we were allowed to take in were our wooden bowl, our rosary, and writing material.

With the Invigilators satisfied, we were led one by one to a box, told to enter, and after we had done so the door was shut and a bar put across. Then the Abbot and the Head Examiner came and fixed a huge seal, so that the door could not be opened. A trap-hatch some seven inches square could be opened only from the outside. Through this we were passed examination papers at the beginning of each day. The worked papers were collected at dusk.

Tsampa was passed in as well, once a day. Buttered tea was different, we could have as much as we wanted by merely calling "po-cha kesho" (bring tea). As we were not allowed out for any purpose whatever, we did not drink too much!

My own stay in that box was for ten days. I was taking the herbal examination, anatomy, a subject of which I had already a very good knowledge, and divinity. Those subjects occupied me from first to last light for five seemingly endless days. The sixth day brought a change, and a commotion. From a nearby box came howls and screams. Running footsteps, and a babble of voices.



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Clatter of a heavy wooden door being unbarred. Soothing murmurs, and the screams subsided to a sobbing undertone. For one, the examination had ended. For me, the second half was about to start. An hour late, the sixth day's papers were brought. Metaphysics. Yoga. Nine branches of it. And I had to pass in the whole lot. Five branches are known very slightly to the Western world: Hatha yoga teaches mastery over the purely physical body, or "vehicle", as we term it. Kundalini yoga gives one psychic power, clairvoyance, and similar powers. Laya yoga teaches mastery over the mind, one of its offshoots is to remember permanently a thing once read or heard. Raja yoga prepares one for transcendental consciousness and wisdom. Samadhi yoga leads to supreme illumination and enables one to glimpse the purpose and plan beyond life on Earth. This is the branch which enables one, at the instant of leaving this earth-life, to grasp the Greater Reality and abandon the Round of Rebirth; unless one decided to return to Earth for a special purpose, such as to help others in some particular way. The other forms of yoga cannot be discussed in a book of this nature, and certainly my knowledge of the English language is inadequate to do justice to such illustrious subjects. So, for another five days I was busy, like a broody hen in a box.

But even ten-day-long examinations have to end, and as the lama collected the last papers on the tenth night, he was greeted with smiles of delight. That night we had vegetables with our tsampa; the very first change from this one basic food for ten days at least.

That night it was easy to sleep. At no time had I worried about passing, but I did worry about the degree of pass; I had been commanded to be high on the final list. In the morning the seals were broken from the doors, the bars were lifted, and we had to clean our examination boxes before being able to leave. For a week we were able to recover our strength after the considerable ordeal.

Then came two days of judo in which we tried all our holds, and made each other unconscious with our "anesthetic holds." Two days more were devoted to an oral examination on the written papers, in which the examiners questioned us about our weak points only. Let me emphasize that each candidate was orally examined for two whole days each. Another week, during which we reacted according to our temperaments, and then the results were announced. To my noisily expressed joy, I was again at the top of the list. My joy was for two reasons: it proved that the Lama Mingyar Dondup was the best teacher of all, and I knew that the Dalai Lama would be pleased with my teacher and with me.

Some days later, when the Lama Mingyar Dondup was instructing me in his room, the door was thrust open, and a panting messenger, tongue lolling and eyes staring, burst in upon us. In his hands he bore the cleft stick of messages. "From the Inmost One," he gasped, "to the Honourable Medical Lama Tuesday Lobsang Rampa." With that he took from his robe the letter, wrapped in the silken scarf of greeting. "With all speed, Honourable Sir, I have rushed here." Relieved of his burden, he turned and dashed out even faster—in search of chang!

That message: no, I was not going to open it. Certainly it was addressed to me, but... what was in it? More studies? More work? It looked very large, and very official. So long

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as I had not opened it I could not know what was inside, so could not be blamed for not doing this or that. Or so my first thoughts went.

My Guide was sitting back laughing at me, so I passed the letter, scarf and all, to him. He took it and opened the envelope, or outer wrapping. Two folded sheets were inside, these he spread open and read, deliberately being slow about it to tease me further. At last, when I was in a fever of impatience to know the worst, he said: "It is all right, you can breathe again. We have to go to the Potala to see him without delay. That means now, Lobsang. It says here that I have to go as well." He touched the gong at his side, and to the attendant who entered, he gave instructions that our two white horses be saddled immediately. Quickly we changed our robes and selected our two best white scarves. Together we went to the Abbot and told him that we had to go to the Potala to see the Inmost One. "The Peak, eh? He was at the Norbu Linga yesterday. Oh well, you have the letter to say which it is. It must be very official."

In the courtyard monk grooms were waiting with our horses. We mounted and clattered down the mountain-path. Just a little way farther on, and we had to climb up the other mountain, the Potala; really it was hardly worth the fuss of trying to sit on a horse! The one advantage was that the horses would carry us up the steps almost to the top of the Peak. Attendants were waiting for us, as soon as we had dismounted, our horses were led away, and we were hurried off to the Inmost One's private quarters. I entered alone and made my prostrations and scarf presentation.

"Sit down, Lobsang," he said, "I am very pleased with you. I am very pleased with Mingyar for his part in your success. I have read all your examination papers myself."

That caused a shiver of fright. One of my many failings, so I have been told, is that I have a somewhat misplaced sense of humour. Sometimes it had broken out in answering the examination questions, because some questions simply invite that sort of answer! The Dalai Lama read my thoughts, for he laughed outright and said, "Yes, you have a sense of humour at the wrong times, but . . ." a long pause, during which I feared the worst, then, "I enjoyed every word."

For two hours I was with him. During the second hour my Guide was sent for and the Inmost One gave instructions concerning my further training. I was to undergo the Ceremony of the Little Death. I was to visit—with the Lama Mingyar Dondup— other lama-series, and I was to study with the Breakers of the Dead. As these latter were of low caste, and their work of such a nature, the Dalai Lama gave me a written script in order that I could keep my own status. He called upon the Body Breakers to render me "all and every assistance in order that the secrets of the bodies may be laid bare and so that the physical reason for the body being discarded may be discovered. He is also to take possession of any body or parts of a body that he may require for his studies." So that was that!

Before going on to deal with the disposal of dead bodies it may be advisable to write some more about the Tibetan views on death. Our attitude is quite different from that of Western peoples. To us a body is nothing more than a "shell", a material covering for the immortal spirit. To us a dead body is worth less than an old, worn-out suit of clothes. In

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the case of a person dying normally, that is, not by sudden unexpected violence, we consider the process to be like this: the body is diseased, faulty, and has become so uncomfortable for the spirit that no further lessons can be learned.

So it is time to discard the body. Gradually the spirit withdraws and exteriorizes outside the flesh-body. The spirit form has exactly the same outline as the material version, and can very clearly be seen by a clairvoyant. At the moment of death, the cord joining the physical and spirit bodies (the “Silver Cord” of the Christian Bible) thins and parts, and the spirit drifts off. Death has then taken place. But birth into a new life, for the “cord” is similar to the umbilical cord which is severed to launch a newborn baby to a separate existence. At the moment of death the Glow of Life-force is extinguished from the head. This Glow also can be seen by a clairvoyant, and in the Christian Bible is referred to as “The Golden Bowl”. Not being a Christian I am not familiar with the Book, but I believe there is a reference to “Lest the Silver Cord be severed, and the Golden Bowl be shattered”.

Three days, we say, is the time it takes for a body to die, for all physical activity to cease, and the spirit, soul, or ego, to become quite free of its fleshly envelope. We believe that there is an etheric double formed during the life of a body. This “double” can become a ghost. Probably everyone has looked at a strong light, and on turning away apparently saw the light still. We consider that life is electric, a field of force, and the etheric double remaining at death is similar to the light one sees after looking at a strong source, or, in electrical terms, it is like a strong residual magnetic field. If the body had strong reasons for clinging to life, then there is a strong etheric which forms a ghost and haunts the familiar scenes. A miser may have such an attachment for his moneybags that he has his whole focus upon them. At death probably his last thought will be of fright concerning the fate of his money, so in his dying moment he adds to the strength of his etheric. The lucky recipient of the moneybags may feel somewhat uncomfortable in the small hours of the night. He may feel that “Old So-and-so is after his money again”. Yes, he is right, Old So-and-so’s ghost is probably very cross that his (spirit) hands cannot get a grip on that money!

There are three basic bodies; the flesh body in which the spirit can learn the hard lessons of life, the etheric, or “magnetic” body which is made by each of us by our lusts, greeds, and strong passions of various kinds. The third body is the spirit body, the “Immortal Soul”. That is our Lamaist belief and not necessarily the orthodox Buddhist belief. A person dying has to go through three stages: his physical body has to be disposed of, his etheric has to be dissolved, and his spirit has to be helped on the road to the World of Spirit. The ancient Egyptians also believe in the etheric double, in the Guides of the Dead, and in the World of Spirit. In Tibet we helped people before they were dead. The adept had no need of such help, but the ordinary man or woman, or trappa, had to be guided the whole way through. It may be of interest to describe what happens.

One day the Honourable Master of Death sent for me. “It is time you studied the practical methods of Freeing the Soul, Lobsang. This day you shall accompany me.”

We walked down long corridors, down slippery steps, and into the trappas’ quarters.

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Here, in a “hospital room” an elderly monk was approaching that road we all must take. He had had a stroke and was very feeble. His strength was failing and his auric colours were fading as I watched. At all costs he had to be kept conscious until there was no more life to maintain that state. The lama with me took the old monk’s hands and gently held them. “You are approaching the release from toils of the flesh, Old Man. Heed my words that you may choose the easy path. Your feet grow cold. Your life is edging up, closer and closer to its final escape. Compose your mind, Old Man, there is naught to fear. Life is leaving your legs, and your sight grows dim. The cold is creeping upwards, in the wake of your waning life. Compose your mind, Old Man, for there is naught to fear in the escape of life to the Greater Reality. The shadows of eternal night creep upon your sight, and your breath is rasping in your throat. The time draws near for the release of your throat. The time draws near for the release of your spirit to enjoy the pleasures of the After World. Compose yourself, Old Man. Your time of release is near.”

The lama all the time was stroking the dying man from the collar bone to the top of his head in a way which has been proved to free the spirit painlessly. All the time he was being told of the pitfalls on the way, and how to avoid them. His route was exactly described, the route which has been mapped by those telepathic lamas who have passed over, and continued to talk by telepathy even from the next world.

“Your sight has gone, Old Man, and your breath is failing within you. Your body grows cold and the sounds of this life are no longer heard by your ears.

Compose yourself in peace, Old Man, for your death is now upon you. Follow the route we say, and peace and joy will be yours.”

The stroking continued as the old man’s aura began to diminish even more, and finally faded away. A sudden sharp explosive sound was uttered by the lama in an age-old ritual to completely free the struggling spirit. Above the still body the life-force gathered in a cloud-like mass, swirling and twisting as if in confusion, then forming into a smoke-like duplicate of the body to which it was still attached by the silver cord. Gradually the cord thinned, and as a baby is born when the umbilical cord is severed, so was the old man born into the next life. The cord thinned, became a mere wisp, and parted. Slowly, like a drifting cloud in the sky, or incense smoke in a temple, the form glided off. The lama continued giving instructions by telepathy to guide the spirit on the first stage of its journey. “You are dead. There is nothing more for you here. The ties of the flesh are severed. You are in Bardo. Go your way and we will go ours. Follow the route prescribed. Leave this, the World of Illusion, and enter into the Greater Reality. You are dead. Continue your way forward.”

The clouds of incense rolled up, soothing the troubled air with its peaceful vibrations. In the distance drums were carrying out a rolling mutter. From some high point on the lamasery roof, a deep-toned trumpet sent its message crashing over the countryside. From the corridors outside came all the sounds of vigorous life, the “sussh sussh” of felt boots and, from somewhere, the grumbling roar of a yak. Here, in this little room, was silence. The silence of death. Only the telepathic instructions of the lama rippled the surface of the room’s quiet. Death, another old man had gone on his long Round of Exist-

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ences, profiting by his lessons in this life, maybe, but destined to continue until he reached Buddhahood by long, long effort.

We sat the body in the correct lotus posture and sent for those who prepare the bodies. Sent for others to continue the telepathic instruction of the departed spirit. For three days this continued, three days during which relays of lamas carried out their duties. On the morning of the fourth day one of the Ragyab came. He was from the Disposers of the Dead colony where the Lingkor road branches to Dechen Dzong. With his arrival, the lamas ceased their instruction, and the body was given over to the Disposer. He doubled it up into a tight circle and wrapped it in white cloth. With an easy swing, he lifted the bundle on to his shoulders and strode off. Outside he had a yak. Without hesitation he lashed the white mass on to the beast's back, and together they marched off. At the place of the Breaking the Corpse Carrier would hand his burden to the Breakers of the Bodies. The "Place" was a desolate stretch of land dotted with huge boulders, and containing one large level stone slab, large enough to hold the biggest body. At the four corners of the slab there were holes in the stone, and posts driven in. Another stone slab had holes in it to half its depth.

The body would be placed upon the slab and the cloth stripped off. The arms and legs of the corpse would be tied to the four posts. Then the Head Breaker would take his long knife and slit open the body. Long gashes would be made so that the flesh could be peeled off in strips. Then the arms and legs would be sliced off and cut up. Finally, the head would be cut off and opened.

At first sight of the Corpse Carrier vultures would have come swooping out of the sky, to perch patiently on the rocks like a lot of spectators at an open-air theatre. These birds had a strict social order and any attempt by a presumptuous one to land before the leaders would result in a merciless mobbing.

By this time the Body Breaker would have the trunk of the corpse open. Plunging his hands into the cavity, he would bring out the heart, at sight of which the senior vulture would flap heavily to the ground and waddle forward to take the heart from the Breaker's outstretched hand. The next-in-order bird would flap down to take the liver and with it would retire to a rock to eat.

Kidneys, intestines, would be divided and given to the "leader" birds. Then the strips of flesh would be cut up and given to the others. One bird would come back for half the brain and perhaps one eye, and another would come flapping down for yet another tasty morsel. In a surprisingly short time all the organs and flesh would have been eaten, leaving nothing but the bare bones remaining on the slab. The breakers would snap these into convenient sizes, like firewood, and would stuff them into the holes in the other slab. Heavy hammers would then be used to crush the bones to a fine powder. The birds would eat that!

These Body Breakers were highly skilled men. They took a pride in their work and for their own satisfaction they examined all the organs to determine the cause of death. Long experience had enabled them to do this with remarkable ease. There was, of course, no real reason why they should be so interested, but it was a matter of tradition to ascer-



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tain the illness causing “the spirit to depart from this vehicle.” If a person had been poisoned—accidentally or deliberately—the fact soon became obvious. Certainly I found their skill of great benefit to me as I studied with them. I soon became very proficient at dissecting dead bodies. The Head Breaker would stand beside me and point out features of interest: “This man, Honourable Lama, has died from a stoppage of blood to the heart. See, we will slit this artery, here, and—yes—here is a clot blocking the blood flow.” Or it may be: “Now this woman, Honourable Lama, she has a peculiar look. A gland here must be at fault. We will cut it out and see.” There would be a pause while he cut out a good lump, and then: “Here it is, we will open it; yes, it has a hard core inside.”

So it would go on. The men were proud to show me all they could, they knew I was studying with them by direct order of the Inmost One. If I was not there, and a body looked as if it was particularly interesting, they would save it until I arrived. In this way I was able to examine hundreds of dead bodies, and definitely I excelled at surgery later! This was far better training than the system whereby medical students have to share cadavers in hospital school dissecting-rooms. I know that I learned more anatomy with the Body Breakers than I did at a fully equipped medical school later.

In Tibet, bodies cannot be buried in the ground. The work would be too hard because of the rocky soil and the thinness of the earth covering. Nor is cremation possible on economic grounds; wood is scarce and to burn a body, timber would have to be imported from India and carried to Tibet across the mountains on the backs of yaks. The cost would be fantastic. Water disposal was not permissible either, for to cast dead bodies into the streams and rivers would pollute the drinking-water of the living. There is no other method open to us than air disposal, in which, as described, birds consume the flesh and the bones. It differs only from Western method in two ways: Westerners bury bodies and let the worms take the place of birds. The second difference is that in the Western world the knowledge of the cause of death is buried with the body and no one knows if the death certificate really has stated the correct cause. Our Body Breakers make sure that they know what a person died of!

Everyone who dies in Tibet is “disposed of” in this way except the highest lamas, who are Previous Incarnations. These are embalmed and placed in a glass-fronted box where they can be seen in a temple, or embalmed and covered with gold. This latter process was most interesting. I took part in such preparations many times. Certain Americans who have read my notes on the subject cannot believe that we really used gold; they say that it would be beyond “even an American’s skill”! Quite, we did not mass-produce things, but dealt with individual items as only the craftsman could. We in Tibet could not make a watch to sell for a dollar. But we can cover bodies in gold.

One evening I was called to the presence of the Abbot. He said: “A Previous Incarnation is shortly to leave his body. Now he is at the Rose Fence. I want you to be there so that you can observe the Preserving in Sacredness.”

So once again I had to face the hardships of the saddle and journey to Sera. At that lamasery I was shown to the room of the old abbot. His auric colours were on the point of extinction, and about an hour later he passed from the body to the spirit. Being an abbot,

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and an erudite man, he had no need to be shown the path through the Bardo. Nor had we need to wait the usual three days. For that night only the body sat in the lotus attitude, while lamas kept their death watch.

In the morning, at the first light of day, we filed in solemn procession down through the main lamasery building, into the temple, and through a little-used door down to secret passages below. Ahead of me two lamas were carrying the body on a litter. It was still in the lotus position. From the monks behind came a deep chanting and, in the silences, the trill of a silver bell. We had on our red robes, and over them our yellow stoles. On the walls our shadows were thrown in flickering, dancing outline, exaggerated and distorted by the light of the butter-lamps and flaring torches.

Down we went, down into secret places. At last, some fifty or sixty feet below the surface, we arrived at a sealed stone door. We entered; the room was ice-cold. The monks carefully set down the body, and then all departed except three lamas and I. Hundreds of butter-lamps were lit and provided a harsh yellow glare. Now the body was stripped of its vestments and carefully washed. Through the normal body orifices the internal organs were removed and placed into jars which were carefully sealed. The inside of the body was thoroughly washed and dried, and a special form of lacquer was poured into it. This would form a hard crust inside the body, so that the outlines would be as in life. With the lacquer dry and hard, the body cavity was packed and padded with great care so as not to disturb the shape. More of the lacquer was poured in to saturate the padding and, in hardening, to provide a solid interior. The outer surface of the body was painted with lacquer and allowed to dry. Over the hardened surface a "peeling solution" was added, so that the thin sheets of filmy silk which were now to be pasted on, could later be removed without causing harm. At last the padding of silk was considered adequate. More lacquer (of a different type) was poured on, and the body was now ready for the next stage of the preparations. For a day and a night it was allowed to remain stationary so that final and complete drying could take place. At the end of that time we returned to the room to find the body quite hard and rigid and in the lotus position.

We carried it in procession to another room beneath, which was a furnace so built that the flames and heat could circulate outside the walls of this room and so provide an even and high temperature. The floor was thickly covered with a special powder, and in this, in the centre, we placed the body. Down below, monks were already preparing to light the fires. Carefully we packed the whole room tightly with a special salt from one district of Tibet, and a mixture of herbs and minerals. Then, with the room filled from floor to ceiling, we filed out of the corridor, and the door of the room was closed and sealed with the Seal of the Lamasery. The order to light the furnaces was given. Soon came the crackling of wood and the sizzling of burning butter as the flames spread.

With the furnaces well alight, they would continue to burn yak-dung and waste butter. For a whole week the fire raged down below, sending clouds of hot air through the hollow walls of the Embalming Chamber. At the end of the seventh day no more fuel was added. Gradually the fires died down and flickered out. The heavy stone walls creaked and groaned in their cooling. Once more the corridor became cool enough to enter. For three days all was still as we all waited for the room to reach the normal temperature. On

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the eleventh day from the date of sealing, the Great Seal was broken and the door pushed open. Relays of monks scraped out the hardened compound with their hands. No tools were used in case the body was harmed. For two days the monks scraped away, crushing in the hands the friable salt compound. At last the room was empty—except for the shrouded body sitting so still in the centre, still in the lotus attitude. Carefully we lifted it and carried it to the other room, where in the light of the butter-lamps we would be able to see more clearly.

Now the silken coverings were peeled off one by one until the body alone remained. The preserving had been perfect. Except that it was much darker, the body might have been that of a sleeping man, who might at any time awaken. The contours were as in life and there was no shrinkage. Once again lacquer was applied to the naked dead body, and then the goldsmiths took over. These were men with a skill unsurpassed. Craftsmen. Men who could cover dead flesh with gold. Slowly they worked, layer upon layer of the thinnest, softest gold. Gold worth a fortune outside Tibet, but here valued only as a sacred metal—a metal that was incorruptible, and so symbolic of Man's final spirit state. The priest-goldsmiths worked with exquisite care, attentive to the minutest detail, so that when their work was finished they left as testimony of their skill a golden figure, exact as in life, with every line and wrinkle reproduced. Now the body, heavy with its gold, was carried to the Hall of Incarnations and, like the others there, set up on a gold throne. Here in this Hall there were figures dating back to the earliest times—sitting in rows, like solemn judges watching with half-closed eyes the frailties and failings of the present generation. We talked in whispers here and walked carefully, as if not to disturb the living-dead. To one body in particular I was attracted—some strange power held me fascinated before it. It seemed to gaze at me with an all-knowing smile. Just then there was a gentle touch on my arm, and I nearly dropped with fright.

“That was you, Lobsang, in your last incarnation. We thought you would recognize it!” My Guide led me to the next gold figure and remarked: “And that was I.”

Silently, both much moved, we crept from the Hall and the door was sealed behind us. Many times after I was allowed to enter that Hall and study the gold-clad figures. Sometimes I went alone and sat in meditation before them. Each has its written history, which I studied with the greatest interest. Here was the history of my present Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, the story of what he had done in the past, a summary of his character and his abilities. The dignities and honours conferred upon him. The manner of his passing.

Here also was my past history and that, too, I studied with my full attention. Ninety-eight gold figures sat here in the Hall, in the hidden chamber carved from the rock, and with the well-concealed door. The history of Tibet was before me. Or so I thought. The earliest history was to be shown to me later.

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## **CHAPTER SEVENTEEN**

### **FINAL INITIATION**

After, at various lamaseries, I had seen the embalming some half dozen times, I was one day sent for by the Abbot in charge of Chakpori. "My friend," said he, "on the direct order of the Precious One you are to be initiated as an abbot. As you have requested, you can—like Mingyar Dondup—continue to be addressed as 'lama'. I merely give the message of the Precious One."

So as a Recognized Incarnation, I had again the status with which I left the Earth some six hundred years before. The Wheel of Life had revolved full circle. Some time later an aged lama came to my room and told me that now I must undergo the Ceremony of the Little Death. "For my son, until you have passed the Gateway of Death, and returned, you cannot truly know that there is no death. Your studies in astral traveling have taken you far. This will take you much farther, beyond the realms of life, and into the past of our country."

The preparatory training was hard and prolonged. For three months I led a strictly supervised life. Special courses of horrible-tasting herbs added an unpleasant item to my daily menu. I was adjured to keep my thoughts "on that alone which is pure and holy". As if one had much choice in a lamasery! Even tsampa and tea had to be taken in less quantity. Rigid austerity, strict discipline, and long, long hours of meditation.

At last, after three months, the astrologers said that the time was now right, the portents were favourable. For twenty-four hours I fasted until I felt as empty as a temple drum. Then I was led down those hidden stairs and passages far below the Potala. Far down we went, flaring torches in the hands of the others, nothing in mine. Down through the corridors I had traversed before. At last we reached the end of the passage. Solid rock confronted us. But a whole boulder was swung aside at our approach. Another path confronted us—a dark and narrow path with the odour of stale air, spices, and incense. Several yards farther on we were stopped momentarily by a ponderous gold-sheathed door which was slowly opened to the accompaniment of protesting squeaks which echoed and reechoed as if through a vast space. Here the torches were extinguished, and

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butter-lamps lit. We moved ahead into a hidden temple carved from the solid rock by volcanic action in days long past. These corridors and passages once had led molten lava to the mouth of a belching volcano. Now puny humans trod the way and thought that they were gods. But now, I thought, we must concentrate on the task at hand, and here was the Temple of Secret Wisdom.

Three abbots led me in. The rest of the lamaistic retinue had melted away in the darkness, as the dissolving memories of a dream. Three abbots, aged, desiccated with years and gladly awaiting their recall to the Heavenly Fields; three old men, perhaps the greatest metaphysicians in the whole of the world, ready to give me my final ordeal of initiation. Each carried in the right hand a butter-lamp, and in the left a thick stick of smouldering incense. Here the cold was intense, a strange cold seemingly not of this earth. The silence was profound; what faint sounds there were served merely to accentuate that silence. Our felt boots made no footfalls; we might have been ghosts gliding along. From the saffron brocade robes of the abbots there came a faint rustle. To my horror I felt tingles and shocks all over me. My hands glowed as if a fresh aura had been added. The abbots, I saw, were also glowing. The very, very dry air and the friction of our robes, had generated a static electric charge. An abbot passed me a short gold rod and whispered, "Hold this in your left hand and draw it along the wall as you walk and the discomfort will cease." I did, and with the first release of stored electricity nearly jumped out of my boots. After that it was painless.

One by one, butter-lamps flickered into life, lit by unseen hands. As the wavering yellow light increased, I saw gigantic figures, covered in gold, and some half buried in uncut gems. A Buddha loomed out of the gloom, so huge that the light did not reach beyond the waist. Other forms were dimly seen; the images of devils, the representations of lust, and the forms of the trials which Man had to undergo before the realization of Self.

We approached a wall on which was painted a fifteen-foot Wheel of Life. In the flickering light it appeared to revolve and made the senses reel with it. On we went until I was sure we would crash into the rock. The leading abbot vanished; what I had imagined to be a dark shadow was a well-concealed door. This gave entrance to a path going down and down—a narrow, steep winding path where the faint glow of the abbots' butter-lamps merely seemed to intensify the dark. We felt our way haltingly, stumbling, sometimes sliding. The air was heavy and oppressive and it felt as if the whole weight of the earth above was pressing down on us. I felt as if we were penetrating the heart of the world.

A final bend in the tortuous passage, and a cavern opened to our view, a cavern of rock glittering with gold, veins of it—lumps of it. A layer of rock, a layer of gold, a layer of rock—so it went on. High, very high above us, gold glinted like stars in a dark night sky, as sharp specks of it caught and reflected back the faint light the lamps shed.

In the centre of the cavern was a shining black house—a house as if made of polished ebony. Strange symbols ran along its sides, and diagrams like those I had seen on the walls of the lake tunnel. We walked to the house and entered the wide, high door. Inside



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were three black stone coffins, curiously engraved and marked. There was no lid. I peered inside, and at the sight of the contents caught my breath and felt suddenly faint.

“My son,” exclaimed the leading abbot, “look upon these. They were gods in our land in the days before the mountains came. They walked our country when seas washed our shores, and when different stars were in the sky. Look, for none but Initiates have seen these.”

I looked again, fascinated and awed. Three gold figures, nude, lay before us. Two male and one female. Every line, every mark faithfully reproduced by the gold. But the size! The female was quite ten feet long as she lay, and the larger of the two males was not under fifteen feet. Their heads were large and somewhat conical at the top. The jaws were narrow, with a small, thin-lipped mouth. The nose was long and thin, while the eyes were straight and deeply recessed. No dead figures, these—they looked asleep.

We moved quietly and spoke softly as if afraid they would awaken. I saw a coffin-lid to one side; on it was engraved a map of the heavens—but how very strange the stars appeared. My studies in astrology had made me quite familiar with the heavens at night, but this was very, very different.

The senior abbot turned to me and said: “You are about to become an Initiate, to see the Past and to know the Future. The strain will be very great. Many die of it, and many fail, but none leave here alive unless they pass. Are you prepared, and willing?”

I replied that I was. They led me to a stone slab lying between two coffins. Here at their instruction I sat in the lotus attitude, with my legs folded, my spine erect, and the palms of my hands facing up.

Four sticks of incense were lighted, one for each coffin and one for my slab. The abbots each took a butter-lamp and filed out. With the heavy black door shut I was alone with the bodies of the age-old dead. Time passed as I meditated upon my stone slab. The butter-lamp which I had carried spluttered and went out. For a few moments its wick smoldered red and there was the odour of burning cloth, then even that faded and was gone.

I lay back on my slab and did the special breathing which I had been taught throughout the years. The silence and the dark were oppressive. Truly it was the silence of the grave. Quite suddenly my body became rigid, cataleptic. My limbs became numb and icy cold. I had the sensation that I was dying, dying in that ancient tomb more than four hundred feet below the sunshine. A violent shuddering jerk within me, and the inaudible impression of a strange rustling and creaking as of old leather being unfolded. Gradually the tomb became suffused by a pale blue light, like moonlight on a high mountain-pass. I felt a swaying, a rising and falling. For a moment I could imagine that I was once more in a kite, tossing and jouncing at the end of the rope. Awareness dawned that I was floating above my flesh body. With awareness came movement. Like a puff of smoke I drifted as if on an unfelt wind. Above my head I saw a radiance, like a golden bowl. From my middle depended a cord of silver-blue. It pulsed with life and glowed with vitality.

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I looked down at my supine body, now resting like a corpse amid corpses. Little differences between my body and those of the giant figures slowly became apparent. The study was absorbing. I thought of the petty conceit of present-day mankind and wondered how the materialists would explain the presence of these immense figures. I thought... but then I became aware that something was disturbing my thoughts. I seemed that I was no longer alone.

Snatches of conversation reached me, fragments of unspoken thoughts. Scattered pictures began to flash across my mental vision. From far away someone seemed to be tolling a great, deep-toned bell. Quickly it came nearer and nearer until at last it appeared to explode in my head, and I saw droplets of coloured light and flashes of unknown hues. My astral body was tossed and driven like a leaf upon a winter gale. Scurrying flecks of red-hot pain lashed across my consciousness. I felt alone, deserted, a waif in a tottering universe. Black fog descended upon me, and with it a calmness not of this world.

Slowly the utter blackness enfolding me rolled away. From somewhere came the booming of the sea, and the hissing rattle of shingle under the drive of the waves. I could smell the salt-laden air, and the tang of the seaweed. This was a familiar scene: I lazily turned on my back, in the sun-warmed sand, and gazed up at the palm trees. But, part of me said, I had never seen the sea, never even heard of palm trees! From a nearby grove came the sound of laughing voices, voices that grew louder as a happy group of sun-bronzed people came into sight. Giants! All of them. I looked down, and saw that I, too, was a "giant". To my astral perceptions came the impressions: countless ages ago, Earth revolved nearer the sun, in the opposite direction. The days were shorter and warmer. Vast civilizations arose, and men knew more than they do now. From outer space came a wandering planet and struck the Earth a glancing blow. The Earth was sent reeling, out of its orbit, and turning in the opposite direction. Winds arose and battered the waters, which, under different gravitational pulls, heaped upon the land, and there were floods, universal floods. Earthquakes shook the world. Lands sank beneath the seas, and others arose. The warm and pleasant land which was Tibet ceased to be a seaside resort and shot some twelve thousand feet above the sea. Around the land mighty mountains appeared, belching out fuming lava. Far away in the highlands rifts were torn in the surface, and vegetation and fauna of a bygone age continued to flourish. But there is too much to write in a book, and some of my "astral initiation" is far too sacred and private to put into print.

Some time later I felt the visions fading and becoming dark. Gradually my consciousness, astral and physical, left me. Later I became uncomfortably aware that I was cold—cold with lying on a stone slab in the freezing darkness of a vault. Probing fingers of thought in my brain, "Yes, he has returned to us. We are coming !" Minutes passed, and a faint glow approached. Butter-lamps. The three old abbots.

"You have done well, my son. For three days you have lain here. Now you have seen. Died. And lived."

Stiffly I climbed to, my feet, swaying with weakness and hunger. Out from that never-

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to-be-forgotten chamber and up to the cold, cold air of the other passages. I was faint with hunger, and overcome with all that I had seen and experienced. I ate and drank my fill and that night, as I lay down to sleep, I knew that soon I would have to leave Tibet, and go to the strange foreign countries, as foretold. But now I can say that they were and are stranger than I would have imagined possible!

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## **CHAPTER EIGHTEEN**

### **TIBET—FAREWELL!**

A few days later, as my Guide and I were sitting beside the River of Happiness, a man came galloping by. Idly he gazed in our direction and recognized the Lama Mingyar Dondup. Instantly the dust at the horse's feet was aswirl with the violence of his stopping.

"I have a message from the Inmost One, for the Lama Lobsang Rampa."

From his pouch he pulled the long, familiar packet wrapped in the silk scarf of greeting. He handed it to me with a triple prostration, and backed away, mounted his horse, and galloped off. Now I was much more assured; the events below the Potala had given me self-confidence. I opened the packet and read the message before passing it to my Guide—and friend—the Lama Mingyar Dondup.

"I have to go to the Inmost One at the Jewel Park in the morning. You have to go as well."

"One does not normally guess at the Precious Protector's remarks, Lobsang, but I feel that you will shortly be leaving for China, and I, well, as I told you, I shall soon be returning to the Heavenly Fields. Let us make the most of this day and of the scant time remaining."

In the morning I trod the familiar path to the Jewel Park, down the hill, across the road, and into the main gates. The Lama Mingyar Dondup walked with me. In both our minds was the thought that this was perhaps the last time we would make this journey together. Perhaps it was reflected, too, strongly in my face, for when I saw the Dalai Lama alone, he said: "The time of parting, of taking fresh paths is always hard and fraught with misery. Here in this Pavilion I sat in meditation for hours, wondering if I would do right to stay or leave when our country was invaded. Either would cause pain to some. Your Path is straight ahead, Lobsang, and it is not an easy path for anyone. Family, friends, country—all must be left behind. The Path ahead contains, as you have been told, hardship, torture, misunderstanding, disbelief; all that is unpleasant. The ways of the foreigners are strange and not to be accounted for. As I told you once before, they believe only that which they can do, only that which can be tested in their Rooms of Science. Yet the greatest science of all, the Science of the Overself, they leave untouched. That is your Path, the Path you chose before you came to this Life. I have arranged for you to leave for

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China at the end of five days.”

Five days! Five days!! I have expected five weeks. As my Guide and I climbed up to our mountain home, no word was exchanged between us until we were again within the walls of the Temple.

“You will have to see your parents, Lobsang. I will send a messenger.”

Parents? The Lama Mingyar Dondup had been more than a father and mother to me. And soon he would be leaving this life before I returned to Tibet in a few short years. All I would see of him then would be his gold-covered figure in the Hall of Incarnations—like an old, discarded robe for which the wearer had no further use.

Five days! Busy days. From the Potala Museum a new suit of Western clothes was brought for me to try on. Not that I was going to wear one in China, my lama robes would be more suitable there, but so that the others could see how I looked. Oh, that suit! Tight tubes of cloth that gripped my legs, so tight that I was afraid to bend. Now I knew why the Westerners could not sit in the lotus attitude: their clothes were too tight. Certainly I thought I was “ruined for life” by these tight tubes. They put a white shroud on me, and around my neck they tied a thick ribbon and pulled it tight as if they were going to strangle me. Over that they fitted a short piece of cloth with patches and holes behind, in which, they said the Westerners kept things—instead of in a robe as we did.

But the worst was yet to come. They put thick and heavy “gloves” on my feet and pulled them tight with black strings with metal ends. The beggars who went on hands and knees around the Lingkhör road sometimes used gloves similar to these on their hands, but they were wise enough to use good Tibetan felt boots on their feet. I felt that I would be crippled, and so would not be able to go to China. A black inverted bowl with an edge round it was put on my head, and I was told that I was dressed as a “Western gentleman of leisure”. It seemed to me that they would have to have leisure, as surely they could not be expected to do any work dressed up like this!

On the third day I went again to my former home. Alone, on foot, as when I first set out. But this time as a lama, and as an abbot. Father and mother were at home to meet me. This time I was an honoured guest. In the evening of that day I again went to father’s study, and signed my name and rank in the Family Book. Then I set off again, on foot, for the lamasery which had been my home for so long.

The remaining two days soon passed. On the evening of the last day I again saw the Dalai Lama and made my farewells and received his blessing. My heart was heavy as I took leave of him. The next time I would see him, as we both knew, would be when he was dead.

In the morning, at first light, we set out. Slowly, reluctantly.

Once more I was homeless, going to strange places, and having to learn all over again. As we reached the high mountain-pass we turned to take a last long look at the Holy City of Lhasa. From the top of the Potala a solitary kite was flying.



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## **BOOK TWO:**

### **DOCTOR FROM LHASA**

#### **Author's Foreword**

WHEN I was in England I wrote *The Third Eye*, a book which is true, but which has caused much comment. Letters came in from all over the world, and in answer to requests I wrote this book, *Doctor from Lhasa*. My experiences, as will be told in a third book, have been far beyond that which most people have to endure, experiences which are paralleled only in a few cases in history. That, though, is not the object of this book which deals with a continuation of my autobiography.

I am a Tibetan lama who came to the western world in pursuance of his destiny, came as was foretold, and endured all the hardships as foretold. Unfortunately, western people looked upon me as a curio, as a specimen who should be put in a cage and shown off as a freak from the unknown. It made me wonder what would happen to my old friends, the Yetis, if the westerners got hold of them—as they are trying to do.

Undoubtedly the Yeti would be shot, stuffed, and put in some museum. Even then people would argue and say that there were no such things as Yetis! To me it is strange beyond belief that western people can believe in television, and in space rockets that may circle the Moon and return and yet not credit Yetis or “Unknown Flying Objects,” or, in fact, anything which they cannot hold in their hands and pull to pieces to see what makes it work.

But now I have the formidable task of putting into just a few pages that which before took a whole book, the details of my early childhood. I came of a very high-ranking family, one of the leading families in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. My parents had much to say in the control of the country, and because I was of high rank I was given severe training so that, it was considered, I should be fit to take my place. Then, before I was seven years of age, in accordance with our established custom, the Astrologer Priests of Tibet were consulted to see what type of career would be open to me. For days before these preparations went forward, preparations for an immense party at which all the leading citizens, all the notabilities of Lhasa would come to hear my fate. Eventually the Day of Prophecy arrived.

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Our estate was thronged with people. The Astrologers came armed with their sheets of paper, with their charts, and with all the essentials of their profession. Then, at the appropriate time, when everyone had been built up to a high pitch of excitement, the Chief Astrologer pronounced his findings. It was solemnly proclaimed that I should enter a lamasery at the age of seven, and be trained as a priest, and as a priest surgeon. Many predictions were made about my life; in fact the whole of my life was outlined. To my great sorrow everything they said has come true. I say “sorrow” because most of it has been misfortune, and hardship, and suffering, and it does not make it any easier when one knows all that one is to suffer.

I entered the Chakpori lamasery when I was seven years of age, making my lonely way along the path. At the entrance I was kept, and had to undergo an ordeal to see if I was hard enough, tough enough to undergo the training. This I passed, and then I was allowed to enter. I went through all the stages from an absolutely raw beginner, and in the end I became a lama, and an abbot. Medicine and surgery were my particular strong points. I studied these with avidity, and I was given every facility to study dead bodies. It is a belief in the west that the lamas of Tibet never do anything to bodies if it means making an opening.

The belief is, apparently, that Tibetan medical science is rudimentary, because the medical lamas treat only the exterior and not the interior. That is not correct. The ordinary lama, I agree, never opens a body, it is against his own form of belief. But there was a special nucleus of lamas, of whom I was one, who were trained to do operations, and to do operations which were possibly even beyond the scope of western science.

In passing there is also a belief in the west that Tibetan medicine teaches that the man has his heart on one side, and the woman has her heart on the other side. Nothing could be more ridiculous. Information such as this has been passed on to the western people by those who have no real knowledge of what they are writing about, because some of the charts to which they refer deal with astral bodies instead, a very different matter. However, that has nothing to do with this book.

My training was very intensive indeed, because I had to know not only my specialized subjects of medicine and surgery, but all the Scriptures as well because, as well as being a medical lama, I also had to pass as a religious one, as a fully trained priest. So it was necessary to study for two branches at once, and that meant studying twice as hard as the average. I did not look upon that with any great favour!

But it was not all hardship, of course. I took many trips to the higher parts of Tibet—Lhasa is 12,000 feet above sea level—gathering herbs, because we based our medical training upon herbal treatment, and at Chakpori we always had at least 6,000 different types of herb in stock. We Tibetans believe that we know more about herbal treatment than people in any other part of the world. Now that I have been around the world several times that belief is strengthened.

On several of my trips to the higher parts of Tibet I flew in man-lifting kites, soaring above the jagged peaks of the high mountain ranges, and looking for miles, and miles, over the countryside. I also took part in a memorable expedition to the almost inacces-

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sible part of Tibet, to the highest part of the Chang Tang Highlands. Here, we of the expedition found a deeply secluded valley between clefts in the rock, and warmed, warmed by the eternal fires of the earth, which caused hot waters to bubble out and flow into the river. We found, too, a mighty city, half of it exposed in the hot air of the hidden valley, and the other half buried in the clear ice of a glacier. Ice so clear that the other part of the city was visible as if through the very clearest water. That part of the city which has been thawed out was almost intact. The years had dealt gently indeed with the buildings. The still air, the absence of wind, had saved the buildings from damage by attrition. We walked along the streets, the first people to tread those streets for thousands and thousands of years. We wandered at will through houses which looked as if they were awaiting their owners, until we looked a little more closely and saw strange skeletons, petrified skeletons, and then we realized that here was a dead city. There were many fantastic devices which indicated that this hidden valley had once been the home of a civilization far greater than any now upon the face of the earth. It proved conclusively to us that we were now as savages compared to the people of that bygone age. But in this, the second book, I write more of that city.

When I was quite young I had a special operation which was called the opening of the third eye. In it a sliver of hard wood, which had been soaked in special herbal solutions, was inserted in the centre of my forehead in order to stimulate a gland which gave me increased powers of clairvoyance. I was born markedly clairvoyant, but then, after the operation, I was really abnormally so, and I could see people with their aura around them as if they were wreathed in flames of fluctuating colours. From their auras I could divine their thoughts; what ailed them, what their hopes and fears were. Now that I have left Tibet I am trying to interest western doctors in a device which would enable any doctor and surgeon to see the human aura as it really is, in colour. I know that if doctors and surgeons can see the aura, they can see what really affects a person. So that by looking at the colours, and by the outline of the moving bands, the specialist can tell exactly what illnesses a person is suffering from. Moreover, this can be told before there is any visible sign in the physical body itself, because the aura shows evidence of cancer, TB, and other complaints, many months before it attacks the physical body. Thus, by having such early warning of the onset of disease the doctor can treat the complaint, and cure it infallibly. To my horror, and very deep sorrow, western doctors are not at all interested. They appear to think it is something to do with magic, instead of being just ordinary common sense, as it is. Any engineer will know that high tension wires have a corona around them. So has the human body, and it is just an ordinary physical thing which I want to show to the specialists, and they reject it. That is a tragedy. But it will come in time. The tragedy is that so many people must suffer and die needlessly, until it does come.

The Dalai Lama, the thirteenth Dalai Lama, was my patron. He ordered that I should receive every possible assistance in training, and in experience. He directed that I should be taught everything that could be crammed into me, and as well as being taught by the ordinary oral system, I was also instructed by hypnosis, and by various other forms which there is no need to mention here. Some of them are dealt with in this book, or in *The Third Eye*. Others are so novel, and so incredible that the time is not ripe for them to be

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discussed.

Because of my powers of clairvoyance I was able to be of a great assistance to the Inmost One on various occasions. I was hidden in his audience room so that I could interpret a person's real thoughts and intentions from the aura. This was done to see if the person's speech and thoughts tallied particularly when they were foreign statesmen visiting the Dalai Lama. I was an unseen observer when a Chinese delegation was received by the Great Thirteenth. I was an unseen observer, too, when an Englishman went to see the Dalai Lama, but on the latter occasion I nearly fell down in my duty because of my astonishment at the remarkable dress which the man wore, my first, very first sight of European dress!

The training was long and arduous. There were temple services to be attended throughout the night as well as throughout the day. Not for us the softness of beds. We rolled ourselves in our solitary blanket, and went to sleep on the floor. The teachers were strict indeed, and we had to study, and learn, and commit everything to memory. We did not keep notebooks, we committed everything to memory. I learned metaphysical subjects as well. I went deeply into it, clairvoyance, astral travelling, telepathy, I went through the whole lot. In one of my stages of initiation I visited the secret caverns and tunnels beneath the Potala, caverns and tunnels of which the average man knows nothing. They are the relics of an age-old civilization which is almost beyond memory, beyond racial memory almost, and on the walls were the records, pictorial records of things that flow in the air, and things that went beneath the earth.

In another stage of initiation I saw the carefully preserved bodies of giants, ten feet, and fifteen feet long. I too, was sent to the other side of death, to know that there is no death, and when I returned I was a Recognized Incarnation, with a rank of an abbot. But I did not want to be an abbot, tied to a lamasery. I wanted to be a lama, free to move about, free to help others, as the Prediction said I would.

So, I was confirmed in the rank of lama by the Dalai Lama himself, and by Him I was attached to the Potala in Lhasa. Even then my training continued, I was taught various forms of western science, optics, and other allied subjects. But, at last the time came when I was called once again to the Dalai Lama, and given instructions.

He told me that I had learned all that I could learn in Tibet, that the time had come for me to move on, to leave all that I loved, all that I cared for. He told me that special messengers had been sent out to Chungking to enroll me as a student of medicine and surgery in that Chinese city. I was sick at heart when I left the presence of the Inmost one, and made my way to my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, and told him what had been decided.

Then I went to the home of my parents to tell them also what had happened, that I was to leave Lhasa. The days flew by, and the final day came when I left Chakpori, when for the last time I saw Mingyar Dondup in the flesh, and I made my way out of the city of Lhasa, the Holy City, on to the high mountain passes. And as I looked back the last thing I saw was a symbol. For from the golden roofs of the Potala a solitary kite was flying.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Into the Unknown**

NEVER before had I felt so cold, so hopeless, and so miserable. Even in the desolate wastes of the Chang Tang Highlands, 20,000 feet or more above sea level, where the grit-laden, subzero winds whipped and cut to bloodstained tatters any exposed skin, I had been warmer than now; there the cold was not so bitter as the fearsome chill I felt at my heart. I was leaving my beloved Lhasa. As I turned I saw behind me diminutive figures on the golden roofs of the Potala, and above them a solitary kite dipped and bobbed in the slight breeze, dipped and bobbed as if to say, "Farewell, your days of kite flying are over now, on to more serious matters." To me that kite was a symbol, a kite up in the immensity of blue, held to its home by a thin cord. I was going off to the immensity of the world beyond Tibet, held by the thin cord of my love for Lhasa.

I was going to the strange, terrible world beyond my peaceful land. I was indeed sick at heart as I turned my back upon my home and with my fellows rode off into that great unknown. They too were unhappy, but they had the consolation of knowing that after leaving me at Chungking, 1,000 miles away, they could start off home. They would return, and on their journey back they would have the great consolation of knowing that every step they took brought them nearer to home. I had to continue ever on to strange lands, to strange people, and to stranger and stranger experiences.

The prophecy made about my future when I was seven years old had said that I should enter a lamasery and be trained first as a chela, then on to the state of a trappa, and so on, until in the fullness of time I could pass the examination of a lama. From that point, so the astrologers said, I was to leave Tibet, leave my home, leave all that I loved, and go out into what we termed barbarian China. I would journey to Chungking and study to become a doctor and surgeon. According to the Priest Astrologers I would be involved in wars, I would be a prisoner of strange peoples, and I would have to rise above all temptation, all suffering, to bring help to those in need. They told me that my life would be hard, that suffering and pain and ingratitude would be my constant companions. How right they were!

So with these thoughts in my mind—not by any means cheerful thoughts—I gave the



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order to carry on forward. As a precaution when we were just beyond sight of Lhasa we dismounted from our horses and made sure that they were comfortable, that the saddles were not too tight, nor yet too loose. Our horses were to be our constant friends on the journey, and we had to look after them at least as well as we looked after ourselves. With that settled and with the consolation of knowing that our horses were at ease, we remounted and resolutely set our gaze forward, and rode on.

It was early in 1927 when we left Lhasa and made our slow, slow way to Chotang on the river Brahmaputra. We had had many discussions as to the most suitable route, and this, by way of the river and Kanting, was recommended as being the most suitable. The Brahmaputra is a river which I know well, having flown above one of its sources in a range on the Himalayas when I had been fortunate enough to fly a man-lifting kite. We, in Tibet, regarded the river with reverence, but nothing like the reverence with which it was regarded elsewhere. Hundreds of miles away where it rushed down to the Bay of Bengal, it was deemed to be sacred, almost as sacred as Benares.

It was the Brahmaputra, so we were told, which made the Bay of Bengal. In the early days of history the river was swift, and deep too, and as it rushed down almost in a straight line from the mountains it scoured away at the soft soil and made the wonderful bay, the glorious bay. We followed the river through the mountain passes into Sikang.

In the old days, the happy days, when I was very young, Sikang was part of Tibet, a province of Tibet. Then the British made an incursion into Lhasa. After that the Chinese were encouraged to invade and so they captured Sikang. With murderous intent they walked into that part of our country, killing, raping, and pillaging, and they took Sikang to themselves. They staffed it with Chinese officials, officials who had lost favour elsewhere were sent to Sikang as a form of punishment. Unfortunately for them the Chinese government gave them no support. They had to manage the best way they could. We found that these Chinese officials were mere puppets, helpless men, ineffectual, men at whom Tibetans laughed. Of course, at times we pretended to obey the Chinese officials, but that was mere politeness. When their back was turned we went our own way. Our journey continued day after day. We made our halts convenient to bring us to a lamasery where we could stay the night. As I was a lama, indeed an abbot, a Recognized Incarnation, we were given the very best welcome which the monks could manage. Furthermore I was travelling under the personal protection of the Dalai Lama, and that indeed counted heavily.

We made our way to Kanting. This is a very famous market town, well known for its sale of yaks, but particularly famous as an exporting centre for the brick-tea which we found so palatable in Tibet. This tea was brought from China, it was not just ordinary tea leaves but more or less a chemical concoction. It had tea, bits of twig, soda, saltpetre, and a few other things in it because in Tibet food was not the plentiful commodity that it is in some other parts of the world, and our tea had to act as a form of soup as well as drink. In Kanting the tea is mixed and made into blocks or bricks as they are more commonly called. These bricks were such a size and weight that they could be loaded upon horses, and later upon the yaks which would carry them over the high mountain ranges to Lhasa where they would be sold in the market and transported throughout Tibet.

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Tea bricks had to be of special size and shape, but they also had to be specially packed so that if a horse stumbled in a mountain fold and tipped the tea into a river no harm would be done. These bricks were packed tightly into a green hide, or, as it is sometimes called, a raw hide, and were then quickly dipped in water. After this they would be put on rocks in the sun to dry. As they dried they shrank, they shrank amazingly, and they absolutely compressed the contents. In drying they took on a brown appearance and they were as hard as bakelite but very much stronger. Any of these hides when dried could be rolled down a mountain- side and land safely and unharmed. It could be tipped into a river, and perhaps stay there a couple of days. When fished out and dried everything would be intact, no water would have entered so nothing would be spoilt. Our bricks of tea in their dried hide cases were among the most hygienic packages in the world. Tea, by the way, was often used as currency. A trader who had no money with him could break off a lump of tea and barter it. There was never any need to bother about cash while one had tea bricks.

Kanting impressed us with its businesslike turmoil. We were used only to our own Lhasa, but here in Kanting there were peoples from a lot of countries, from as far away as Japan, from India, Burma, and the nomad people from beyond the Takla mountains. We wandered in the market place, mixed with the traders and heard the strange voices and the different languages. We rubbed shoulders with monks of the different religions, of the Zen sect, and others.

And then, marveling at the novelty of it all, we made our way to a small lamasery on the road beyond Kanting. Here we were expected. In fact, our hosts were getting rather worried that we had not arrived. We soon told them that we had been looking in the market place, and listening to the market gossip. The abbot in charge made us very welcome and listened with avidity to our tales of Tibet, listened to the news we gave, for we came from the seat of learning, the Potala, and we were the men who had been in the Chang Tang Highlands and seen great marvels. Our fame had indeed preceded us.

Early in the morning after we had attended the service in the temple we took to the road again on our horses, carrying a small amount of food, tsampa, with us. The road was a mere earth track high up on the sides of a gorge. Down below there were trees, more trees than any of us had ever seen before. Some were partly hidden by the mist set up by the spray of a waterfall. Giant rhododendrons also covered the gorge while the ground itself was carpeted with varied-hued flowers, small mountain flowers which scented the air and added colour to the scene. We, though, were oppressed and miserable, miserable at the thought of leaving home and oppressed by the density of the air. All the time we were getting lower and lower, and we were finding it more and more difficult to breathe. There was another difficulty with which we were afflicted; in Tibet where the air is thin water boils at a lower temperature and in the higher places we could drink tea which was actually boiling. We kept our tea and water on the fire until all the bubbles gave warning that it was ready to drink. At first, in this lower land, we suffered greatly from scalded lips as we tried to gauge the temperature of the water. It was our habit to drink the tea straight from the fire. We had to do so in Tibet otherwise the bitter cold would rob our tea of all heat. At that time we had no knowledge that the denser air would

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affect the boiling point, nor did it occur to us that we could wait for the boiling water to cool with no danger of it freezing.

We were seriously upset by the difficulty in breathing, by the weight of air pressing on our chests and on our lungs. At first we thought it was emotion at leaving our beloved Tibet, but later we found that we were being suffocated, drowned by air. Never before had any of us been below 1,000 feet. Lhasa itself is 12,000 feet high. Frequently we were living at even greater heights, as when we went to the Chang Tang Highlands where we were above 20,000 feet. We had heard many tales in the past about Tibetans who had left Lhasa to go and seek their fortunes in the lowlands. Rumor said that they had died after months of misery with shattered lungs. The old wives' tales of the Holy City had definitely made much ado of the statement that those who left Lhasa to go to the lower lands went to their painful deaths. I knew that there was no truth in that because my own parents had been to Shanghai where they had much property, they had been there and had returned safely. I had had little to do with my parents because they were such busy people and in such a high position that they had no time for us children.

My information had been gleaned from servants. But now I was seriously perturbed about the feelings we were experiencing; our lungs felt scorched, we felt that we had iron bands about our chests keeping us from breathing. Each breath was a shuddering effort, and if we moved too quickly pains, like pains of fire, shot through us. As we journeyed on, getting lower and lower, the air became thicker and the temperature warmer. It was a terrible climate for us. In Lhasa, in Tibet, the weather had been very cold indeed, but a dry cold, a healthy cold, and in conditions like that temperature mattered little, but now, in this thick air with so much moisture, we were almost at our wits' end to keep going. At one time the others tried to persuade me to order an about-turn, a return to Lhasa, saying that we would all die if we persisted in our foolhardy venture, but I, mindful of the prophecy, would have none of it. And so we journeyed on. As the temperature became warmer we became dizzy, intoxicated almost, and we seemed to have trouble with our eyes. We could not see as far as usual, nor so clearly, and our judgment of distances was all wrong. Much later I found the explanation. In Tibet there is the purest and cleanest air in the world, one can see for fifty miles or more, and as clearly as if it were but ten. Here, in the dense air of the low-lands, we could not see so far, and what we could see was distorted by the very thickness of the air and its impurities.

For many days we journeyed along, getting lower and lower, travelling through forests containing more trees than any of us had ever dreamed existed. There is not much wood in Tibet, not many trees, and for a time we could not resist getting off our horses and running to the different sorts of trees, touching them, smelling them. They were all so strange to us and in such plentitude. The rhododendrons of course were familiar because we had many rhododendrons in Tibet. Rhododendron blossom was, in fact, a luxury article of food when properly prepared. We rode on, marveling at all we saw, marveling at the difference between this and our home. I cannot say how long we took, how many days or how many hours, because such things did not interest us at all. We had plenty of time, we knew nothing of the scurry and bustle of civilization, nor if we had known would we have cared.

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We rode about eight or ten hours a day and we stayed our nights at convenient lamaseries. They were not all of our own form of Buddhism, but no matter, we were always welcome. With us, with the real Buddhists of the East, there is no rivalry, no friction or rancor, and a traveler was always welcome. As was our custom we took part in all the services while we were there. We lost no opportunity of conversing with the monks who were so keen to welcome us. Many were the strange tales they told us about the changing conditions in China; about how the old order of peace was changing, how the Russians, "the men of the bear," were trying to indoctrinate the Chinese with political ideals, which to us, seemed completely wrong. It seemed to us that what the Russians were preaching was "What is yours, is mine; what is mine is staying mine!" The Japanese, as well, we were told, were making trouble in various parts of China. It appeared to be a question of overpopulation. Japan was producing too many children, and producing too little food, so they were trying to invade peaceful peoples, trying to steal from them, as if only the Japanese mattered.

At last we left Sikang, and crossed the border into Szechwan. A few days more, and we came to the banks of the river Yangtze. Here, at a little village, we stopped late one afternoon. We stopped, not because we had got to our destination for the night, but because there was a milling throng ahead of us, a meeting of some sort. We edged our way forward, and, all of us being rather bulky, we had no difficulty at all in pushing our way to the front of the group.

A tall white man was there, standing on an ox cart, gesticulating, telling of the wonders of Communism, trying to exhort the peasants to rise up and kill the landowners. He was waving about papers with pictures on them, showing a sharp-featured, bearded man, calling him the Savior of the world. But we were not impressed with the picture of Lenin, nor with the man's talk. We turned away in disgust, and carried on for a few miles more to the lamasery at which we were going to stay the night.

There were lamaseries in various parts of China as well as the Chinese monasteries and temples. For some people, particularly in Sikang, Szechwan, or Chinghai, prefer the form of Buddhism of Tibet, and so our lamaseries were there to teach those who were in need of our assistance. We never sought converts, we never asked people to join us, for we believed that all men were free to choose. We had no love of those missionaries who went about ranting that one had to join such and such a religion to be saved. We knew that when a person wanted to become a lamaist they would become so without any persuading on our part. We knew how we had laughed at missionaries who came to Tibet, who came to China; it was a standing joke that people would pretend to be converted just to get the gifts and the other, so-called, advantages which the missionaries were dispensing. And another thing, Tibetans and the old order of Chinese were polite folk, they, tried to cheer the missionaries, tried to make them believe that they were having some success, but never for one moment did we believe what they were telling us. We knew that they had their belief, but we preferred to keep our own.

We traveled on and followed the course of the river Yangtse, the river which I was later to know so well, because this was a pleasanter path. We were fascinated in watching the vessels on the river. We had never seen boats before although some of us had

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seen pictures of them, and I had once seen a steam ship in a special clairvoyant session which I had had with my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. But that is detailed later in this book. In Tibet our boatmen used coracles. These were very light frames covered with yak-skin, and they would carry perhaps four or five passengers besides the boatman. Often an unpaying passenger would be the goat which was the boatman's pet, but which also did its share on land because the boatman would load his own personal belongings, his bundle or his blankets on to the goat's back while he would shoulder the coracle and climb the rocks to avoid the rapids which otherwise would wreck his boat. Sometimes a farmer who wanted to cross a river would use a goatskin or a yak-skin which had legs and other openings sealed off. He would use this contraption in much the same way as Westerners use water-wings. But now, we were interested to see real boats with sails, lateen sails, flapping in the wind.

One day we drew to a halt near some shallows. We were intrigued; two men were walking in the river with a long net between them. Ahead of them two more men were beating the water with sticks and yelling horribly. We thought at first that these were madmen, and the ones with the net were following them to try to take them into custody. We watched, and then, at a signal from one of the men, the clamor stopped and the two with the net walked together so that their paths crossed. Between them they drew taut the two ends of the net, and dragged it ashore. Safely up on the sandy banks they tipped the net out and pounds and pounds of shining, struggling fish dropped to the ground.

It shocked us because we never killed. We believed that it was very wrong to kill any living creature. In our own rivers in Tibet fish would come to touch a hand stretched in the water toward them. They would take food from one's hands. They had no fear whatever of man, and were often pets. But here, in China, they were just food. We wondered how these Chinese could claim to be Buddhists when they so blatantly killed for their own gain.

We had dallied too long; we had sat by the side of the river for an hour, perhaps two hours, and we were unable to reach a lamasery that night. We shrugged our shoulders in resignation and prepared to camp by the side of the path. A little to the left, however, was a secluded grove of trees with the river running through and we made our way there, and dismounted, tethering our horses so that they could feed on the quite—to us—luxuriant herbage. It was a simple matter to gather sticks and to light a fire, then we boiled our tea, and ate our tsampa. For a time we sat around the fire, talking of Tibet, talking of what we had seen on our journey, and of our thoughts for the future. One by one my companions yawned, turned away and rolled themselves into the blankets and fell asleep. At last, as the glowing embers turned to blackness, I too rolled in my blanket and lay down, but not to sleep.

I thought of all the hardships I had undergone. I thought of leaving my home at the age of seven, of entering a lamasery, of the hardships, the severe training. I thought of my expeditions to the Highlands, and further North to the great Chang Tang Highlands. I thought also of the Inmost One, as we called the Dalai Lama, and then inevitably of my beloved Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. I felt sick with apprehension, heartbroken, and then it seemed as if the countryside was lit up as if by the noonday sun. I looked in



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amazement, and I saw my Guide standing before me. "Lobsang! Lobsang!" he exclaimed, "Why are you so downhearted? Have you forgotten? Iron ore may think itself senselessly tortured in the furnace, but as the tempered steel blade looks back it knows better. You have had a hard time, Lobsang, but it is all for a good purpose. This, as we have so often discussed, is merely a world of illusion, a world of dreams. You have many hardships yet to face, many hard tests, but you will triumph, you will overcome them, and in the end you will accomplish the task which you have set out to do." I rubbed my eyes, then it occurred to me, of course, the Lama Mingyar Dondup had come to me by astral travelling. I had often done things like that myself, but this was so unexpected, it showed me so plainly that he was thinking of me all the time, helping me with his thoughts.

For some time we communed with the past, dwelling upon my weaknesses, and feeling, with a transient warm glow of happiness, the many happy moments when we had been together, like father and son. He showed me, by mental pictures, some of the hardships to be encountered and—more happily—the eventual success which would come to me in spite of all attempts to prevent it. After an indeterminate time, the golden glow faded as my Guide reiterated his final words of hope and encouragement. With them as my predominant thoughts, I rolled over beneath the stars in the frozen night sky, and eventually fell asleep.

The next morning we were awake early and prepared our breakfast. As was our custom we held our morning service which I, as the senior ecclesiastical member, conducted, and then we continued our journey along the beaten earth track by the side of the river.

About midday the river bore away to the right and the path went straight ahead; we followed it. It ended at what to us appeared to be a very wide road. Actually, as I know now, it was in fact a second class road, but we had never before seen a man-made road of this type. We rode along it, marveling at the texture of it, marveling at the comfort of not having to look out for roots to avoid, not having to look for pot-holes. We jogged along thinking that in two or three more days we would be at Chungking. Then, something about the atmosphere, something unexplained, made us glance at each other uneasily. One of us happened to look up to the far horizon. Then he stood upright in his stirrups in alarm, wide-eyed and gesticulating. "Look!" he said. "A dust storm is approaching." He pointed ahead to where there was most certainly a grey-black cloud approaching at considerable speed. In Tibet there are dust clouds; clouds of grit-laden air travelling at perhaps eighty miles an hour or more, from which all people except the yak must shelter. The yak's thick wool protects it from harm, but all other creatures, particularly humans, are lacerated and made to bleed by the stinging grit which scratches the face and hands. We were certainly disconcerted because this was the first dust storm we had seen since leaving Tibet, and we looked about us to see where we could shelter. But there did not appear to be anything suitable for us.

To our consternation we became aware that the approaching cloud was accompanied by a most strange sound, a sound stranger than any of us had ever heard before; something like a temple trumpet being played by a tone-deaf learner, or, we thought miserably, like the legions of the devil marching upon us. Thrum-thrum-thrum, it went. Rapidly the roar increased and became stranger and stranger. There were clatters and

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rattles with it. We were almost too frightened to do anything, almost too frightened to think. The dust cloud sped toward us faster and faster. We were terrified and almost paralyzed with fright. We thought again of the dust clouds in Tibet, but most certainly none had ever come at us with a roar. In panic we looked again to find some place of shelter, some place where we should be protected from this terrible storm which was coming upon us. Our horses were much quicker than we at making up their minds where to go; they broke formation, they reared and they bucked. I had an impression of flying hooves, and my horse gave a most ferocious whinny, and seemed to bend in the middle. There was a strange tug, and a feeling that something had broken. "Oh, my leg is torn off!" I thought.

Then my horse and I parted company. I sailed through the air in an arc, and landed flat on my back at the side of the road, stunned. Rapidly the dust cloud came nearer, and I saw inside it the Devil himself, a roaring black monster, shaking and shuddering. It came and it passed. Flat on my back, head awhirl, I saw my first motor vehicle, a battered old ex-American lorry, travelling at its noisy top speed, driven by a grinning Chinese. The stench from it! Devil's breath, we called it later. A mixture of petrol, oil, and manure; the load of manure which it carried was gradually being bounced off, some of it was being jolted over the side to land with a splat beside me. With a clatter and a roar the lorry whizzed by, leaving clouds of choking dust, and a plume of black smoke from the exhaust. Soon it became a weaving dot in the distance, weaving from side to side of the road, the noise abated and there was no sound.

I looked about me in the silence. There was no sign of my companions; perhaps even worse, there was no sign of the horse! I was still trying to disentangle myself because the broken part of the girth had twisted round my legs, when the others appeared, one by one, looking shamefaced and highly nervous in case any other of these roaring demons should appear. We still did not quite know what we had seen. It was all too quick and the clouds of dust had obscured so much. The others sheepishly dismounted, and helped me to brush the dust of the road off my garments.

At last I was presentable again but where was that horse? My companions had come from all directions, yet not one of them had seen my mount. We looked about, we called, we looked in the dust for any sign of hoof marks, but we could find no trace whatever. It seemed to us that the wretched animal must have jumped into the lorry and been carried off. No, we could find no trace whatever and we sat down by the side of the road to discuss what to do. One of my companions offered to stay at a nearby hut, so I could have his horse, and he would get back on his companions' return, when I should have been left at Chungking. But I would have none of this. I knew as well as he did that he wanted a rest and it did not solve the mystery of the missing horse.

My companions' horses whinnied and from a nearby Chinese peasant's hut a horse whinnied in reply. It was soon stifled as if by a hand over the nostrils. Light dawned upon us. We looked at each other and prepared for instant action. Now, why should a horse be inside that poverty-stricken hut? That ramshackle building was not the home of a man who would own a horse. Obviously the horse was being concealed from us. We jumped to our feet and looked about us for stout clubs. Finding no suitable weapons about we cut

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them from the nearby trees, and then we set off to the hut, a determined troop, suspicious of what was happening. The door was a rickety affair with thongs for hinges.

Our polite knocking produced no reply. There was dead silence, not a sound. Our rude demands for entry elicited no response. Yet, previously a horse had whinnied and its whinny had been suppressed. So we made a fierce onslaught on that door. For a short time it withstood our efforts, then, as the thong hinges showed signs of parting and the door tilted and appeared to be on the point of collapse, it was hastily thrown open. Inside was a wizened Chinaman, his face contorted with terror. It was a wretched hovel, filthy, and the owner was a tattered rag-bag of a man. But that was not what interested us. Inside was my horse with a bag round its muzzle to keep it quiet. We were not at all pleased with the Chinese peasant and indicated our disapproval in no uncertain manner. Under the pressure of our interrogation he admitted that he had tried to steal the horse from us. We, he said, were rich monks and could afford to lose a horse or two. He was just a poor peasant. By the look of him he thought we were going to kill him. We must have looked fierce. We had traveled perhaps eight hundred miles and we were tired and rough looking. However, we had no unpleasant designs upon him. Our combined knowledge of Chinese was entirely adequate to enable us to convey to him our opinion of his act, his probable end in this life, and his undoubted destination in the next. With that off our minds and most certainly on his, we resaddled the horse, being very careful that the girth band was secure, and again we set off for Chungking.

That night we stayed at a small lamasery, very small. It had six monks in it, but we were given every hospitality. The night after was the last night of our long journey. We came to a lamasery where, as the representatives of the Inmost One, we were greeted with that courtesy which we had come to consider as our due. Again we were given food and accommodation; we took part in their temple services, and talked far into the night about events in Tibet, about our journeys to the great Northern Highlands and about the Dalai Lama. I was very gratified to know that even here my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, was well known. I was interested too to meet a Japanese monk who had been to Lhasa and studied our form of Buddhism which is so different from that of the Zen.

There was much talk of impending changes in China, of revolution, of a new order, an order in which all the landowners were to be thrown out and illiterate peasants were to take their place. Russian agents were everywhere promising wonders, accomplishing nothing, nothing constructive. These Russians, to our mind, were agents of the Devil, disrupting, corrupting, like plague destroying a body.

The incense burned low and was replenished. It burned low again and again, and was replenished. We talked on; our talk was full of foreboding for the dire changes which were taking place. Men's values were distorted, matters of the soul were not considered to be valuable nowadays, but only transient power. The world was a very sick place. The stars rolled high in the sky. We talked on and at last one by one we lay down where we were to sleep. In the morning we knew our journey would come to an end. My journey for the time being, but my companions would return to Tibet leaving me alone in a strange unkind world where might was right. Sleep did not come to me easily that last night.

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In the morning after the usual temple services and a very good meal we set out again on the road to Chungking, our horses much refreshed. Traffic was more numerous now. Lorries and various forms of wheeled vehicles abounded. Our horses were restive, frightened. They were not accustomed to the noise of all these vehicles and the smell of burnt petrol was a constant irritant to them. It was indeed an effort to stay in our high peaked saddles.

We were interested to see people working in the fields, the terraced fields, fertilized with human excreta. The people were clad in blue, the blue of China. They all seemed to be old, and they were very tired. They, moved listlessly as if life was too great a burden for them or as if the spirit was crushed and there was nothing more worth living and striving for. Men, women and children worked together. We rode on, still following the course of the river which we had rejoined some miles back. At last we came in sight of the high cliffs on which the old city of Chungking was built. To us this was the very first sight of any city of note outside Tibet. We stopped and gazed in fascination, but my gaze held not a little dread of the new life which lay ahead before me.

In Tibet I had been a power in the land through my rank, through my accomplishments and my close association with the Dalai Lama. Now, I had come to a foreign city as a student. It reminded me all too vividly of the hardships of my early days. So it was not with happiness that I gazed at the scene ahead. This, I well knew, was but a step on the long, long track, the track which would lead me to hardships, to strange countries, stranger even than China, to the West where men worshipped only gold .

Before us stretched rising ground with the terraced fields clinging precariously to the steep sides. At the top of the rise grew trees, which to us who had seen so few until recent days seemed to be a forest. Here, too, the blue-clad figures worked on in the distant fields, plodding along as their remote ancestors had plodded before them. One-wheeled carts drawn by small ponies rumbled along, laden with garden produce for the markets of Chungking. They were queer vehicles. The wheel came up through the centre of the cart, leaving space on each side for the goods. One such vehicle which we saw had an old woman balanced on one side of the wheel and two small children on the other.

Chungking! End of the journey for my companions. The start of the journey for me, the start of another life. I had no friendship for it as I looked at the steep gorges of the swirling rivers. The city was built on high cliffs quite thickly clothed with houses.

From where we stood it appeared to be an island, but we knew better. We knew that it was not so, but was surrounded on three sides by the waters of the rivers Yangtse and Chialing. At the foot of the cliffs, washed by the water, was a long wide strand of sand, tapering off to a point where the rivers met. This was to be a spot well known to me in later months. Slowly we mounted our horses and moved forward. As we got nearer we saw that steps were everywhere and we had a sharp pang of home-sickness as we climbed the seven hundred and eighty steps of the street of steps. It reminded us of the Potala. And so we came to Chungking.

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Chungking**

WE went along past the shops with brilliantly lighted windows, and in those windows were materials and goods of a kind which we had never seen before. Some of them we had seen pictured in magazines which had been brought to Lhasa over the Himalayas from India, and before reaching India from the U.S.A., that fabled land. A young Chinese came hurtling towards us on the weirdest thing I had ever seen, an iron framework with two wheels, one in front, one behind. He looked at us and could not take his eyes away. Through this he lost control of the framework, the front wheel hit a stone, the thing turned sideways, and the rider went straight over the front wheel to land on his back. Some elderly Chinese lady was almost swept off her feet by him. She turned round and berated the poor fellow, who we considered had already suffered enough. He got up, looking remarkably foolish, and picked up his iron framework with the front wheel buckled. He put it across his shoulders and went on sadly down the hill; the street of steps.

We thought we had come to a mad place, because everyone was acting most peculiarly. We went slowly along, marveling at the goods in the shops, trying to decipher what price they would be, and what they were for, because although we had seen the magazines from America none of us had understood the slightest word, but had entertained ourselves with the pictures alone.

Further along we came upon the college which I was to attend. We stopped, and I went inside so that I could report my arrival. I have friends still in the hands of the Communists, and I do not intend to give any information whereby they can be identified because I used to be most intimately connected with the Young Tibetan Resistance Movement. We most actively resisted the Communists in Tibet. I entered, there were three steps. I went up these and into a room. Here there was a desk at which a young Chinese was sitting on one of those peculiar little platforms of wood, supported by four poles and with two more poles and a crossbar to support the back. What a lazy way of sitting, I thought, I could never manage like that! He looked quite a pleasant young fellow. He was dressed in blue linen as most of the Chinese were. He had a badge in his lapel which indicated that he was a servant of the college. At sight of me his eyes opened quite wide,



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his mouth started to open as well. Then he stood up and clasped his hands together while he bowed low.

"I am one of the new students here," I said. "I have come from Lhasa, in Tibet, with a letter from the Abbot of the Potala Lamasery." And I proffered the long envelope which I had treasured so carefully during our journey, and which I protected from all the rigors of travel. He took it from me, and gave three bows.

"Venerable Abbot," he said, "will you sit down here until I return?"

"Yes, I have plenty of time," I said, and I sat down in the lotus position.

He looked embarrassed and fidgeted nervously with his fingers. He stepped from foot to foot and then swallowed. "Venerable Abbot," he said, "with all humility, and with the deepest respect, may I suggest that you get used to these chairs because we use them in this college." I rose to my feet and sat down most gingerly on one of those abominable contraptions. I thought—as I still think—I will try anything once! This thing seemed to me to be an instrument of torture. The young man went away and left me sitting. I fidgeted, and fidgeted.

Soon pain appeared across my back, then I got a stiff neck and I felt thoroughly out of sorts with everything. Why, I thought, in this unfortunate country one cannot even sit properly as we did in Tibet, but here we have to be propped up from the ground. I tried to shift sideways and the chair creaked, groaned, and swayed, and after that I dared not move again for fear that the whole thing would collapse.

The young man returned, bowed to me again, and said, "The Principal will see you, Venerable Abbot. Will you come this way." He gestured with his hands and made for me to go ahead of him.

"No," I said, "you lead the way. I don't know which way to go." He bowed again and took the lead. It all seemed so silly to me, some of these foreigners, they say they will show you the way and then they expect you to lead them. How can you lead when you just don't know which way to go? That was my point of view and it still is. The young man in blue led me along a corridor and then knocked at the door of a room near the end.

With another bow he opened the door for me and said, "The Venerable Abbot, Lobsang Rampa." With that he shut the door behind me and I was left in the room. There was an old man standing by the window, a very pleasant old man, bald and with a short beard, a Chinaman. Strangely, he was dressed in that awful style of clothing which I had seen before, that they call the western style. He had on a blue jacket and blue trousers and there was a thin white stripe going through. He had on a collar and a coloured tie, and I thought what a sad thing that such an impressive old gentleman has to get rigged up like that.

"So you are Lobsang Rampa," he said. "I have heard a lot about you and I am honored to accept you here as one of our students. I have had a letter about you in addition to the one you brought and I assure you that the previous training which you have had will stand you in very good stead. Your Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, has written to me.

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I knew him well some years ago in Shanghai before I went to America. My name is Lee, and I am the Principal here."

I had to sit down and answer all sorts of questions to test my knowledge of academic subjects and my knowledge of anatomy. The things that mattered, or so it seemed to me, the Scriptures, he tested not at all.

"I am very pleased with your standard," he said, "but you are going to have to study quite hard because here, in addition to the Chinese system, we teach according to the American method of medicine and surgery, and you will have to learn a number of subjects which were not previously in your curriculum. I am qualified in the United States of America, and I have been entrusted by the Board of Trustees with training a number of young men in the latest American methods and co-relating these methods to suit conditions in China." He went on talking for quite a time, telling me of the wonders of American medicine and surgery, and of the methods used for diagnosis. He went on, "Electricity, Magnetism, Heat, Light and Sound, all these subjects you will have to master in addition to the very thorough culture which your Guide has given you."

I looked at him in horror. The first two, Electricity and Magnetism, meant nothing to me. I had not the vaguest idea what he was talking about. But Heat, Light and Sound, well, I thought, any fool knows about those; you use heat to heat your tea, you use light with which to see, and sound when you speak. So what else is there to study about them?

He added, "I am going to suggest that as you are used to hard work, you should study twice as hard as anyone else, and take two courses together, take what we term the Pre-medical Course at the same time as the Medical Training. With your years of experience in study you should be able to do this. In two days' time we have a new Medical Class starting." He turned away and rustled through his papers.

Then he picked up what from pictures I recognized as a fountain pen—the very first I had ever seen—he muttered to himself, "Lobsang Rampa, special training in Electricity and in Magnetism. See Mr. Wu. Make a note he gets special attention." He put down his pen, carefully blotted what he had written, and stood up. I was most interested to see that he used paper for blotting. We used carefully dried sand.

But he was standing up looking at me. "You are well advanced in some of your studies," he said. "From our discussion I should say that you are even in advance of some of our own doctors, but you will have to study those two subjects of which, at present, you have no knowledge." He touched a bell and said, "I will have you shown around and taken to the different departments so that you will have some impression to carry away with you this day. If you are in doubt, if you are uncertain, come to me, for I have promised the Lama Mingyar Dondup to help you to the full extent of my power."

He bowed to me, and I touched my heart to him as I bowed back. The young man in the blue dress entered. The Principal spoke to him in Mandarin. He then turned to me and said, "If you will accompany Ah Fu, he will show you around our college, and answer any questions you may care to put."

This time the young man turned and led the way out, carefully shutting the Principal's

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door behind him. In the corridor he said, "We must go to the Registrar first because you have to sign your name in a book." We went down the corridor and crossed a large hall with a polished floor. At the far side of it was another corridor. We went along it a few paces and then into a room where there was a lot of activity. Clerks were very busy apparently compiling lists of names, while other young men were standing before small tables writing their names in large books. The clerk who was guiding me said something to another man who disappeared into an office adjoining the larger office.

Shortly after, a short, squat Chinaman came out, beaming. He wore extremely thick glasses and he, too, was dressed in the Western style. "Ah," he said, "Lobsang Rampa. I have heard such a lot about you." He held out his hand to me. I looked at it. I did not know what he wanted me to give him. I thought perhaps he was after money.

The guide with me whispered, "You must shake his hand in the Western style."

"Yes, you must shake my hand in the Western style," the short, fat man said. "We are going to use that system here." So I took his hand and squeezed it. "Owe!" he said, "You are crushing my bones."

I said, "Well; I don't know what to do. In Tibet we touch our hearts, like this." And I demonstrated.

He said, "Oh, yes, but times are changing. We use this system. Now shake my hand properly, I will show you how." And he demonstrated. So I shook his hand, and I thought, how utterly stupid this is. He said, "Now you must sign your name to show that you are a student with us." He roughly brushed aside some of the young men who were at the books, and wet his finger and thumb, then he turned over a big ledger. "There," he said, "will you sign your full name and rank there?"

I picked up a Chinese pen and signed my name at the head of the page. "Tuesday Lobsang Rampa," I wrote, "Lama of Tibet. Priest-Surgeon Chakpori Lamasery. Recognized Incarnation. Abbot Designate. Pupil of the Lama Mingyar Dondup."

"Good!" said the short, fat Chinaman, as he peered down at my writing. "Good! We shall get on. I want you to look round our place now. I want you to get an impression of all the wonders of Western science there are here. We shall meet again."

With that he spoke to my guide, and the young fellow said, "Will you come with me, we will go along to the science room first." We went out and walked briskly across the compound and into another long building. Here there was glassware everywhere. Bottles, tubing, flasks—all the equipment that we had seen before only in pictures.

The young man walked to a corner. "Now!" he exclaimed. "Here is something." And he fiddled about with a brass tube and put a piece of glass at the foot of it. Then he twisted a knob, peering into the brass tube. "Look at that!" he exclaimed. I looked. I saw the culture of a germ. The young man was looking at me anxiously. "What! aren't you astounded?" he said.

"Not at all," I replied. "We had a very good one at the Potala Lamasery given to the Dalai Lama by the Government of India. My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, had free

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access to it and I used it often."

"Oh!" replied the young man, and he looked most disappointed. "Then I will show you something else." And he led the way out of the building and into another. "You are going to live at the Lamasery of the Hill," he said, "but I thought you would like to see the very latest facilities which are enjoyed by students who are going to live in."

He opened a room door and I saw first whitewashed walls, and then my fascinated gaze fell upon a black iron frame with a lot of twisted wire stretching from side to side. "What is that?" I exclaimed. "I have never seen anything like that before."

"That," he said, with tones full of pride, "that is a bed. We have six of them in this building, the most modern things of all." I looked. I had never seen anything like it.

"A bed," I said. "What do they do with the thing?"

"Sleep on it," he replied. "It is a very comfortable thing indeed. Lie on it and see for yourself." I looked at him, I looked at the bed, and I looked at him again. Well, I thought, I must not show cowardice in front of any of these Chinese clerks and so I sat down on the bed. It creaked and groaned beneath me, it sagged, and I felt that I was going to fall on the floor.

I jumped up hastily. "Oh, I am too heavy for it," I said.

The young man was trying to conceal his laughter. "Oh, that is what it is meant to do," he answered. "It's a bed, a spring bed." And he flung himself full length on it, and bounced. No, I would not do that, it was a terrible looking thing. I had always slept on the ground, and the ground was good enough for me. The young man bounced again, and bounced right off and landed with a crash on the ground. Serves him right, I thought, as I helped him to his feet.

"That is not all I have to show you," he said. "Look at this." He led me across to a wall where there was a small basin which could have been used for making tsampa for, perhaps, half a dozen monks. "Look at it," he said, "wonderful, isn't it?" I looked at it. It conveyed nothing to me, I could see no use in it. It had a hole in the bottom.

"That's no good," I said. "It has a hole in it. Couldn't make tea in that." He laughed, he was really amused at that.

"That," he said, "is something even newer than the bed. Look!" He put out his hand and touched a lump of metal which was sticking up from one side of the white bowl. To my utter stupefaction water came out of the metal. Water! "It's cold," he said. "Quite cold. Look." And he put his hand in it. "Feel it," he said. So I did. It was water, just like river water. Perhaps a bit staler, it smelled a bit staler than river water, but—water from a piece of metal. Whoever heard of it! He put his hand out and picked up a black thing and pushed it in the hole, in the bottom of the basin. The water tinkled on; soon it filled the basin but did not overflow, it was going somewhere else, through a hole somewhere, but it wasn't falling on the floor. The young man touched the lump of metal again and the flow of water stopped. He put his two hands in the basin full of water and swirled it about. "Look," he said, "lovely water. You don't have to go out and dig it out of a well any more."

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I put my hands in the water and swirled as well. It was quite a pleasant sensation, not having to get down on hands and knees to reach into the depths of some river. Then the young man pulled a chain and the water rushed away gargling like an old man at the point of death. He turned round and picked up what I had thought was somebody's short cloak. "Here," he said, "use this."

I looked at him and I looked at the piece of cloth he had handed me. "What is this for?" I said, "I am fully dressed."

He laughed again. "Oh, no, you wipe your hands on this," he said. "Like this," and he showed me. He passed the cloth back. "Wipe them dry," he said. So I did, but I marveled because the last time I had seen women to speak to in Tibet they would have been very glad of such a piece of cloth to make something useful from it, and here we were spoiling it by wiping our hands on it. Whatever would my mother have said if she could have seen me!

By now I really was impressed. Water from metal. Basins with holes in that could be used. The young man led the way quite jubilantly. We went down some steps and into a room which was underground. "Here," he said, "this is where we keep bodies, men and women." He flung open a door and there, on stone tables, were bodies all ready to be dissected. The air smelt strongly of strange chemicals which had been used to prevent the bodies from decaying. At the time I had no idea at all of what they were, because in Tibet bodies would keep a very long time without decay because of the cold dry atmosphere. Here, in sweltering Chungking, they had to be injected almost as soon as they were dead, so that they could be preserved for the few months which we students would need to dissect them. He moved a cabinet, and opened it.

"Look," he said. "The latest surgical equipment from America. For cutting up bodies, for cutting off arms and legs. Look!" I looked at all those gleaming pieces of metal, all the glasswork, and all the chromium, and I thought, well, I doubt if they can do things any better than we did in Tibet.

After I had been in the college buildings for about three hours I made my way back to my companions who were sitting somewhat anxiously in the quadrangle of the building. I told them what I had seen, what I had been doing. Then I said, "Let us look around this city, let us see what sort of a place it is. It looks very barbaric to me, the stench and the noise is terrible." So we got on our horses again, and made our way out, and looked at the street of steps with all the shops. We dismounted so that we could go and look, one by one, at the remarkable things there were for sale. We looked down streets, down one street at the end of which there seemed to be no further road, it seemed to end abruptly at a cliff. It intrigued us so we walked down and saw that it dipped steeply and there were further steps leading down to the docks. As we looked we could see great cargo vessels, high-stemmed, junks, their lateen sails flapping idly against the masts in the idle breeze which played at the foot of the cliff. Coolies were loading some, going aboard at a jog-trot with long bamboo poles on their shoulders. At each end of the poles were loads carried in baskets.

It was very warm, and we were sweltered.



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Chungking is noted for its sultry atmosphere. Then, as we walked along leading our horses mist came down from the clouds, and then it came up from the river, and we were groping about as if in darkness. Chungking is a high city, high and somewhat alarming. It was a steep stony city with almost two million inhabitants. The streets were precipitous, so precipitous indeed that some of the houses appeared to be caves in the mountainside, while others seemed to jut out and to overhang the abyss. Here every foot of soil was cultivated, jealously guarded, tended. There were strips and patches growing rice or a row of beans or a patch of corn, but nowhere was ground wasted or idle. Everywhere blue-clad figures were bent over, as if they were born that way, picking weeds with tired fingers. The higher class of people lived in the valley of Kialing, a suburb of Chungking, where the air was, by Chinese standards, though not by ours, healthy, where the shops were better and the ground more fertile. Where there were trees and pleasant streams. This was no place for coolies, this was for the prosperous business man, for the professional, and for those of independent means. The Mandarin and those of high caste lived here.

Chungking was a mighty city, the biggest city any of us had ever seen, but we were not impressed. It suddenly dawned upon us that we were very hungry. We were completely out of food, so there was nothing to do but go to an eating place, and eat as the Chinese did. We went to a place with a garish sign which said that they could provide the best meal in Chungking and without delay. We went and sat down at a table. A blue clad figure came to us and asked what we would have. "Have you tsampa?" I said.

"Tsampa!" he replied. "Oh, no, that must be one of those Western dishes. We have nothing like that."

"Well, what have you?" I said.

"Rice, noodles, shark's fins, eggs."

"All right " I said, "we will have rice balls, noodles, shark's fin and bamboo shoot. Hurry up."

He hurried away and in moments was back with the food we wanted. About us others were eating and we were horrified at the chatter and noise they were making. In Tibet, in the lamaseries, it was an inviolable rule that those who were eating did not talk because that was disrespectful to food and the food might retaliate by giving one strange pains inside. In the lamaseries when one ate, a monk always read aloud the Scriptures and we had to listen as we ate.

Here there were conversations going on around us of an extremely light type. We were shocked and disgusted. We ate looking at our plates the whole time in the manner prescribed by our order. Some of the talk was not so light because there was much surreptitious discussion about the Japanese and the trouble they had been making in various parts of China. At that time I was quite ignorant of it. We were not impressed, though, by anything to do with the eating place nor with Chungking. This meal was notable only for this; it was the first meal that I ever had to pay for. After we had had it we went out and found a place in a courtyard of some municipal building where we could sit and talk. We

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had stabled our horses to give them a much needed rest and where they could be fed and watered, because on the morrow my companions were going to set out once again for home, for Tibet.

Now, in the manner of tourists the world over they were wondering what they could take back to their friends in Lhasa, and I too was wondering what I could send to the Lama Mingyar Dondup. We discussed it, and then as if on a common impulse we got to our feet and we walked again to the shops and made our purchases. After that we walked to a small garden where we sat and talked and talked. It was dark now. The evening was upon us. The stars began to shine vaguely through the slight haze, for the fog had gone, leaving just a haze. Once again we rose to our feet and went again in search of food. This time it was seafood, food which we had never had before and which tasted almost alien to us, most unpleasant, but the main thing was that it was food, because we were hungry. With our supper complete we left the eating place and went to where our horses were stabled.

They seemed to be waiting for us and whinnied with pleasure at our approach. They were looking quite fresh, they felt quite fresh too as we got upon them. I was never a good horseman and certainly I preferred a tired horse to a rested one. We rode out into the street and took the road to Kialing.

We left the city of Chungking and we passed through the outskirts of that city on the road to where we were going to stay the night, to the lamasery which was going to be my home by night. We branched to the right and went up the side of a wooded hill. The lamasery was of my own order and it was the nearest approach to going home to Tibet as I entered and went into the temple in time for the service. The incense was wafted round in clouds and the deep voices of the older monks and the higher voices of the acolytes brought a sharp pang of homesickness to me. The others seemed to know how I felt for they were silent and they left me to myself. For a time I stayed in my place after the service had ended. I thought, and thought. I thought of the first time I had entered a lamasery temple after a hard feat of endurance, when I was hungry and sick at heart. Now I was sick at heart, perhaps sicker at heart than I had been the time before, for then I had been too young to know much about life, but now I felt I knew too much of life, and of death.

After a time the aged Abbott in charge of the lamasery crept softly to my side. "My brother," he said, "it is not good to dwell too much upon the past when the whole of the future is before one. The service is ended, my brother, soon it will be time for another service. Will you not go to your bed for there is much to be done on the morrow."

I rose to my feet without speaking and accompanied him to where I was to sleep. My companions had already retired. I passed them, still forms rolled in their blankets. Asleep? Perhaps. Who knows? Perhaps they were dreaming of the journey they had again to undertake and of the pleasurable reunion which they would have at the end of that journey in Lhasa. I, too, rolled myself in my blanket, and lay down. The shadows of the moon lengthened and became long before I slept.

I was awakened by the sound of temple trumpets, by gongs. It was time to rise and to

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attend the service once again. The service must come before the meal, but I was hungry. Yet after the service with food before me I had no appetite. Mine was a light meal, a very light meal because I was feeling sick at heart. My companions ate well, disgustingly well, I thought, but they were trying to get reinforced for the journey back which they were this day to commence. With our breakfast over we walked around a little. None of us said much. There did not seem much which we could say. Then at last I said, "Give this letter and this gift to my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. Tell him I will write to him often. Tell him that you can see how much I miss his company and his guidance." I fiddled about inside my robe. "And this," I said as I produced a package, "this is for the Inmost One. Give it also to my Guide, he will see that it is conveyed to the Dalai Lama."

They took it from me and I turned aside quite overcome with emotion that I did not want the others to see, I did not want them to see me, a high lama, so affected. Fortunately they too were quite distressed because a sincere friendship had sprung up between us, notwithstanding—according to Tibetan standards—the difference in our rank. They were sorry for the parting, sorry that I was being left in this strange world which they hated while they were going back to beloved Lhasa. We walked for a time amid the trees looking at the little flowers carpeting the ground, listening to the birds in the branches, watching the light clouds overhead. Then the time had come. Together we walked back to the old Chinese lamasery nestling amid the trees on the hill overlooking Chungking, overlooking the rivers.

There wasn't much to say, there wasn't much to do. We fidgeted a bit and felt depressed. We went to the stables. Slowly my companions saddled their horses and took the bridle of mine, mine which had brought me so faithfully from Lhasa, and which now—happy creature—was going back to Tibet. We exchanged a few words more, a very few words, then they got on their horses and moved off towards Tibet leaving me standing, gazing down the road after them. They got smaller and smaller. They disappeared from my sight around a bend. A little cloud of dust which had been occasioned by their passing subsided, the clip-clop of their horses' hooves died in the distance. I stood thinking of the past and dreading the future.

I do not know how long I stood in silent misery but I was brought from my despondent reverie by a pleasant voice which said, "Honourable Lama, will you not remember that in China there are those who will be friends with you? I am at your service, Honourable Lama of Tibet, fellow student of Chungking." I turned slowly and there, just behind me, was a pleasant young Chinese monk. I think he rather wondered what my attitude would be to his approach because I was an abbot, a high lama, and he was just a Chinese monk. But I was delighted to see him. He was Huang, a man whom I was later proud to call a friend. We soon got to know each other and I was particularly glad to know that he too was going to be a medical student, starting on the morrow, as was I. He, too, was going to study those remarkable things, Electricity and Magnetism. He was, in fact, to be in both of those courses which I was going to study, and we got to know each other well.

We turned and walked back towards the entrance of the lamasery. As we passed the portals another Chinese monk came forward and said, "We have to report to the college. We have to sign a register."

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"Oh, I have done all that," I said, "I did it yesterday."

"Yes Honourable Lama," the other replied. "But this is not the studentship register which you signed with us, it is a fraternity register because in the college we are all going to be brothers as they are in American colleges."

So together we turned down the path once more, along the lamasery path, through the trees, the path carpeted with flowers, and we turned into the main road from Kialing to Chungking. In the company of these young men who were of much the same age as I, the journey did not seem so long or so miserable. Soon, once again, we came to the buildings which were to be our daytime home and we went in. The young clerk in the blue linen dress was really pleased to see us. He said, "Ah, I was hoping you would call, we have an American journalist here who speaks Chinese. He would very much like to meet a high lama of Tibet."

He led us along the corridor again and into another room, a room which I had not previously entered. It appeared to be some sort of reception room because a lot of young men were sitting about talking to young women, which I thought rather shocking. I knew very little about women in those days. A tall young man was sitting in a very low chair.

He was, I should say, about thirty years of age. He rose as we entered and touched his heart to us in the Eastern way. I of course touched mine in return. We were introduced to him, and then, for some reason, he put out his hand. This time I was not unprepared and I took it, and shook it in the approved manner. He laughed, "Ah, I see that you are mastering the ways of the West which are being introduced to Chungking."

"Yes," I said, "I have got to the stage of sitting in the perfectly horrible chairs and of shaking hands."

He was quite a nice young fellow, and I know his name still; he died in Chungking some time ago. We walked into the grounds and sat down on a low stone wall where we talked for quite a time. I told him of Tibet, of our customs. I told him much about my life in Tibet. He told me of America. I asked him what he was doing in Chungking, a man of his intelligence living in a sweltering place like that when apparently there was no particular reason for him to.

He said that he was preparing a series of articles for a very famous American magazine. He asked if he could mention me in it, and I said, "Well, I would rather that you did not because I am here for a special purpose, to study to progress, and to use this as a jumping-off point for further journeys into the West. I would rather wait until I have done something notable, something worthy of mention. And then, I went on, "then I will get in touch with you and give you this interview which you so much want."

He was a decent young fellow and understood my point. We were soon on quite friendly terms; he spoke Chinese passably well and we had no particular difficulty in understanding each other. He walked with us part of the way back to the lamasery.

He said, "I would very much like sometime, if it can be arranged, to visit the temple and to take part in a service. I am not of your religion," he said, "but I respect it, and I

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would like to pay my respects in your temple.”

“All right,” I answered, “you shall come to our temple. You shall take part in our service and you will be welcome, that I promise.”

With that we parted company because we had so much to do preparing for the morrow, the morrow when I was to begin this fresh career as a student—as if I had not been studying all my life! Back in the lamasery I had to sort out my things, see to my robes which had been travel-stained. I was going to wash them because, according to our custom, we attend to our own clothing, to our own robes, to our own personal matters, and did not employ servants to do our dirty work for us. I was also later going to wear the clothes of a Chinese student, blue clothes, because my own lamaistic robes attracted too much attention and I did not want to be singled out for publicity, I wanted to study in peace. In addition to the usual things such as clothes-washing we had our services to attend, and as a leading lama I had to take my share in the administration of these services because, although during the day I was to be a student, yet at the lamasery I was still a high-ranking priest with the obligations that went with that office. So the day drew to an end, the day which I thought was never going to end, the day when, for the first time in my life, I was completely and utterly cut off from my own people.

In the morning—it was a warm sunny morning—Huang and I set off down the road again to a new life, this time as medical students. We soon covered the short journey and went into the college grounds where there seemed to be hundreds of others milling around a notice board. We carefully read all the notices and found our names were together so that at all times we should be studying together. We pushed our way past others still reading, and made our way to the classroom which had been indicated to us. Here we sat down, rather marveling—or I did—at all the strangeness of the fittings, the desks, and all that. Then, after what seemed to be an eternity of time, others came in, in small groups, and took their places.

Eventually a gong sounded somewhere and a Chinaman entered, and said, “Good morning, gentlemen.” We all rose to our feet because the regulations said that that was the approved method of showing respect, and we replied, “Good morning,” back to him. He said he was going to give us some written papers and we were not to be discouraged by our failures because his task was to find out what we did not know, not how much we knew. He said that until he could find the exact standard of each of us he would not be able to assist us.

The papers would deal with everything, various questions all mixed up, a veritable Chinese broth of knowledge dealing with Arithmetic, Physics, Anatomy, everything relating to medicine and surgery and science, and the subjects which were necessary to enable us to study medicine, surgery and science to higher levels. He gave us clearly to understand that if we did not know how to answer a question then we could put down that we had not studied to that point but give, if we could, some information so that he could assess the exact point at which our knowledge ended.

Then he rang the bell. The door opened and in came two attendants laden with what seemed to be books. They moved amongst us and distributed these books. They were



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not books, actually, but sheaves of questions on paper and many sheets of paper upon which we were to write. Then the other one came and distributed pencils. We were going to use pencils and not brushes on this occasion. So, then we set to, reading through the questions, one by one, answering them as best we could. We could see by the lecturer's aura, or at least I could, that he was a genuine man and that his only interest was to help us.

My Guide and Tutor, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, had given me very highly specialized training. The result of the papers which we were given in about two days' time showed that in very many subjects I was well in advance of my fellow students, but it showed that I had no knowledge whatever of Electricity or Magnetism. Perhaps a week after that examination we were in a laboratory where we were to be given a first demonstration because, like me, some of the others had no idea of the meaning of those two dreadful sounding words.

The lecturer had been giving us a talk about electricity and he said, "Now, I will give you a practical demonstration of the effects of electricity, a harmless demonstration." He handed me two wires and said, "Hold these, will you, hold them tightly until I say; 'let go'." I thought that he was asking me to assist him in his demonstration (he was!) and so I held the wires, although I was rather perturbed because his aura showed that he was contemplating some form of treachery. I thought, well perhaps I am misjudging him, he's not a very nice fellow anyhow. He turned and walked quickly away from me to his own demonstration table. There he pressed a switch. I saw light coming from the wire and I saw the aura of the lecturer betray amazement. He appeared to be intensely surprised.

"Hold them tighter," he said. So I did. I squeezed the wires. The lecturer looked at me and really rubbed his eyes. He was astounded, that was obvious to everyone, even anyone without the ability to see the aura. It was obvious that this lecturer had never had such a surprise before. The other students looked on in open-mouthed wonder. They could not understand what it was all about. They had no idea at all what was intended. Quickly the lecturer came back to me after switching off and took the two wires from me.

He said, "There must be something wrong, there must be a disconnection." He took the two wires in his hand and went back to the table with them. One wire was in his left hand, the other was in his right. Still holding them he stretched forth a finger and flicked on the switch. Then he erupted into a tremendous "Yow! Switch off, it's killing me!" At the same time his body was knotted up as if all his muscles were tied and paralyzed. He continued to yell and scream and his aura looked like the setting sun.

"How very interesting," I thought, "I have never seen anything as pretty as that in the human aura!"

The continued shrieks of the lecturer soon brought people running in. One man took a glance at him and rushed to the table and switched off the switch. The poor lecturer dropped to the floor, perspiring freely and shaking. He looked a sorry sight; his face had a pale greenish tinge to it. Eventually he stood up clasping the edge of the desk.

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"You did that to me."

I replied, "I? I haven't done a thing. You told me to hold the wires and I held them, then you took them from me and you looked as if you were going to die."

He said, "I can't understand it. I can't understand it."

I answered, "What can't you understand? I held the things, what are you talking about?"

He looked at me: "Didn't you really feel anything? Didn't you feel a tingle or anything?"

"Well," I said, "I felt just a pleasant bit of warmth nothing more. Why, what should I feel?"

Another lecturer, the one who had switched off the current said, "Will you try it again?"

I said, "Of course I will, as many times as you like."

So he handed me the wires. He said, "Now I am going to switch on. Tell me what happens."

He pressed the switch, and I said, "Oh, it's just a pleasant bit of warmth. Nothing to worry about at all. It's just as if I had my hands fairly close to a fire."

He said, "Squeeze it tighter." And I did so, I actually squeezed it until the muscles stood out on the backs of my hands. He and the previous lecturer looked at each other, and the current was switched off. Then one of them took the two wires from me and put cloth around them, and he held them lightly in his hands. "Switch on," he said to the other. So the other lecturer switched on, and the man with the wires wrapped in cloth in his hands soon dropped it. He said, "Oh, it's still on." In dropping the two wires fell free of the cloth and touched. There was a vivid blue flash, and a lump of molten metal jumped from the end of the wire.

"Now you have blown the fuses," said one, and he went off to do a repair somewhere.

With the current restored they went on with their lecture about Electricity. They said they were trying to give me two hundred and fifty volts as a shock to show what electricity could do. I have a peculiarly dry skin and two hundred and fifty volts hurt me not at all. I can put my hands on the mains and be quite unaware of whether they are on or not.

The poor lecturer was not of that type at all, he was remarkably susceptible to electric currents. In the course of the lecture they said, "In America if a man commits murder, or if the lawyers say that he is guilty of murder, the man is killed by electricity. He is strapped to a chair, and the current is applied to his body and it kills him." I thought how very interesting. I wonder what they would do with me, though I have no desire to try it seriously.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Medical Days**

A DANK, grey fog came down from the hills above Chungking, blotting out the houses, the river, the masts of the ships down below, turning the lights in the shops to orange-yellow blurs, deadening the sounds, perhaps even improving the appearance of part of Chungking. There was the slithering sound of footsteps and a bent old man came dimly into sight through the fog, and was as quickly lost to view again.

It was strangely silent here, the only sounds were muffled sounds. The fog was as a thick blanket deadening all. Huang and I had finished our classes for the day, and it was now late evening. We had decided to go out from the college from the dissecting rooms, and get a breath of fresh air. Instead we had got this fog. I was feeling hungry; apparently so was Huang. The dampness had got into our bones and chilled us.

“Let us go and have some food, Lobsang. I know a good place,” said Huang.

“All right,” I answered. “I am always ready for something interesting. What have you got to show me?”

“Oh, I want to show you that we in Chungking can live quite well in spite of what you say.”

He turned and led the way, or rather he turned and groped blindly till we reached the side of the street and were able to identify the shops. We went down the hill a little way and then through an entrance which appeared to be remarkably like a cavern in the side of a mountain. Inside the air was even thicker than outside. People were smoking, belching great clouds of evil smelling fumes. It was almost the first time I had seen such a number of people smoking, it was quite a novelty—a nauseating one—to see people with burning brands in their mouth, and smoke trickling out of their nostrils. One man attracted my fascinated gaze. He was producing smoke not just from his nostrils, but from his ears. I pointed him out to Huang.

“Oh, him,” he said, “he’s stone deaf, you know. Had his eardrums kicked in. It’s quite a social asset with him. No eardrums to impede the smoke, so he sends it out of his nos-

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trils and out of his ears too. He goes up to a foreigner and says, 'Give me a cigarette and I'll show you something you can't do'. Keeps him in smokes, that. Still that's nothing. Let's get on with the food. I'll order the meal," said Huang. "I am well known here and we shall get the best at the lowest price."

It suited me fine. I had not eaten too well during the past few days, everything was so strange, and the food so utterly alien. Huang spoke to one of the waiters who made notes on a little pad, and then we sat down and talked. Food had been one of my problems. I could not obtain the type of food to which I was accustomed, and I had to eat, among other things, flesh and fish. To me, as a lama of Tibet, this was truly revolting, but I had been told by my seniors at the Potala in Lhasa that I would have to accustom myself to alien foods, and I had been given absolution from them for the type of food I should consume. In Tibet we, the priests, ate no meat but this was not Tibet, and I had to continue to live in order to fulfil my allotted task. It was possible to obtain the food I wanted, and so I had to eat the revolting messes brought me and pretend that I liked them.

Our lunch arrived. A half-tortoise surrounded with sea slugs, and followed by a dish of curried frogs with cabbage leaves around them. They were quite pleasant but I would have much preferred my own tsampa. So, making the best of things, I had my meal of curried frogs well supported with noodles and rice. We drank tea. One thing I have never touched in spite of all exhortations from those outside of Tibet have been intoxicating liquors. Never, never, never.

In our belief there is nothing worse than these intoxicating drinks, nothing worse than drunkenness. Drunkenness, we consider, is the most vicious sin of all because when the body is sodden with drink the astral vehicle—the more spiritual part of one—is driven out of the physical and has to leave it as prey to any prowling entities. This is not the only life; the physical body is just one particular manifestation, the lowest manifestation, and the more one drinks, the more one harms one's body in other planes of existence.

It is well known that drunkards see "pink elephants" and curious things which have no parallel in the physical world. These, we believe, are the manifestations of some evil entity, some entity who is trying to make the physical body do some harm. It is well known that those who are drunk are not "in possession of their right senses." So, I have not at any time touched intoxicating drinks, not even corn spirit, not even rice wine.

Lacquered duck is a very nice form of food, for those who like meat, that is. I much preferred bamboo shoots; these are unobtainable in the West, of course. The nearest substitute to it is a form of celery which grows in a certain European country. The English celery is quite different and is not so suitable. While discussing Chinese food it is possibly of some interest to say that there is no such dish as chop suey; that is just a name, a generic name for Chinese food, ANY Chinese food. If anyone wants a really good Chinese meal they should go to a first class all-Chinese restaurant and have ragout of mushroom and bamboo shoot.

Then they should take a fish soup. After that, lacquered duck. You will not have a carving knife in the real Chinese restaurant, but the waiter will come along with a small hatchet and he will chop up the duck for you into suitably sized slices. When these are

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approved by you they will be wrapped up with a piece of young onion into a sandwich of unleavened bread. One picks up these small sandwiches and devours each at a mouthful. The meal should end with lotus leaves, or, if you prefer, lotus root. Some people prefer lotus seed, but whichever it is you will need adequate quantities of Chinese tea. This is the type of meal we had in that eating house so well known to Huang. The price was surprisingly reasonable and when eventually we rose to continue our journey we were in quite a blissful state of geniality, well padded, and well fortified with good food to go out again and face the fog. So, we made our way up the street, along the road to Kialing, and when we were part way along that road we turned right into the path leading up to our temple. It was service time when we got back.

The Tablets were hanging limply against their poles there was no breeze, and the clouds of incense were just hanging motionless too. The Tablets are of red material with gold Chinese ideographs upon them. They were the Tablets of the Ancestors and were used in much the same way as tombstones are used to commemorate the dead in Western countries. We bowed to Ho Tai and Kuan Yin, the god of good living and the Goddess of compassion, and went our way into the dimly lit interior of the temple for our service. After that we were unable to face our evening meal, but instead rolled ourselves into our blankets and drifted off to sleep.

There was never any shortage of bodies for dissection. Bodies in Chungking at that time were a very easily obtained commodity. Later, when the war started, we were to have more corpses than we could deal with! But these, these which were obtained for dissection, we kept in an underground room which was carefully cooled. As soon as we could obtain a fresh body from the streets, or from a hospital, we used to inject into the groin a most powerful disinfectant that served to preserve the body for some months. It was quite interesting to go down into the basement and see the bodies on slabs, and to notice how invariably they were thin bodies. We used to have quite heated disputes as to which of us should have the thinnest. The fat bodies were a great trouble in dissecting, there was so much labor with so little result. One could go on cutting and cutting, dissecting out a nerve or an artery and have to dissect away layer after layer of fatty tissues. Bodies were not in short supply at all. Frequently we had so many on hand that we kept them in tanks, in pickle, as we called it. Of course it was not always easy to smuggle a body into the hospital because some of the relatives had strong opinions about such things. In those days young babies who had died were abandoned in the streets, or those adults whose families were too poor to pay for a satisfactory funeral left them out in the streets under cover of darkness. We medical students, then, frequently went out in the early morning to pick the best looking bodies, and, of course, the leanest!

We could have had a whole body to ourselves but often we worked two to a cadaver, one doing the head, the other doing the feet. That was more companionable. Quite frequently we had our lunch in the dissecting room if we were studying for some examination. It was no uncommon thing to see a student with his food spread out on the stomach of a cadaver while his text book, which he was reading, would be propped up against the thigh. It never occurred to us at that time that we could obtain all sorts of curious complaints through infection from dead bodies. Our Principal, Dr. Lee, had all the latest



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American ideas; in some ways he was almost a crank for copying the Americans, but no matter, he was a good man, one of the most brilliant Chinamen that I have met, and it was a pleasure to study with him. I learned a lot and passed many examinations; but I still maintain that I learned far more morbid anatomy from the Body Breakers of Tibet.

Our college and the attached hospital were at the far end of the road away from the docks along from the street steps. In fine weather we had quite a good view across the river, across the terraced fields, because it was in a very prominent position, a prominent landmark, in fact. Toward the harbor in a more business section of the street was an old, old shop looking as if it were in the last stages of decay.

The woodwork appeared to be worm-eaten, and the paint was flaking from the boards. The door was ramshackle and rickety. Above it there was a cutout wooden figure of a gaudily painted tiger. It was so arranged that it arched its back over the entrance. Yawning jowls with ferocious looking teeth and claws which were realistic enough to strike terror into anyone's heart. This tiger was meant to show virility—it is an old Chinese emblem for virility. This shop was a beacon for rundown men, and for those who wished to have greater vigor with which to pursue their amusements. Women, too, went here to get certain compounds, extract of tiger, or extract of ginseng root, when they wanted to have children and for some reason apparently could not. Extract of tiger or extract of ginseng contained large quantities of a substance which help men and women in such difficult times, substances which have only recently been discovered by Western science who hail it as a great triumph of commerce and research. The Chinese and the Tibetans did not know so much about modern research, and so they have had those compounds for three or four thousand years and have not boasted unduly about it. It is a fact that the West could learn so much from the East if the West was more cooperative.

But, to turn to this old shop with its fierce tiger carved and painted above it, with a window full of strange looking powders, mummies and bottles of coloured liquids. This was the shop of an old style medical practitioner where it was possible to obtain powdered toad, the horns of antelope ground to powder to act as an aphrodisiac, and other strange concoctions. Not often in these poorer quarters did the patient go to the modern surgery of the hospital for treatment. Instead he went to this dirty old shop in much the same way as his father had done, and perhaps as his father's father before had done also. He took his complaints to the physician in charge, who sat looking like an owl with powerful lensed spectacles behind a brown wooden barrier.

He would discuss his case and the symptoms, and the old physician would solemnly nod his head and with finger tips touching he would ponderously prescribe the necessary medicine. One convention was that the medicine had to be coloured according to a special code. That was an unwritten law from time before history. For a stomach complaint the medicine provided would be yellow, while the patient suffering from a blood or a heart disease would have red medicine. Those afflicted with bile or liver complaints or even with excessively bad temper would have a green medicine. Patients who were suffering from eye troubles would have blue lotion. The interior of a person presented great problems regarding which colour to use. If a person had a pain inside and it was thought to be of intestinal origin the medicine would be brown. An expectant mother

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had only— so she was told—to take the pulverized flesh of a turtle and the baby would be born painlessly, easily, almost before she was aware of it, and so her day's work would not be interfered with. One injunction was 'Go home, put an apron around you, between your legs, so that the baby shall not drop and strike the ground, and then swallow this pulverized flesh of a turtle!'

The old, unregistered Chinese doctor could advertise, and this he did in a most spectacular manner. Usually he had a large sign, an immense painted sign above his house, to show what a wonderful healer he was. Not only that, but in his waiting room and surgery would be found great medals and shields which wealthy and frightened patients had given him to testify to the miraculous way in which he with coloured medicines, powders and potions, had cured them of unknown and unspecified diseases.

The poor dentist was not so lucky, the older style dentist, that is. Most of the time he had no particular house in which to see patients, but he saw them in the street. The victim sat down on a box and the dentist carried out his examination, his poking and probing, in full view of an appreciative audience. Then, with a lot of strange manoeuvres and gesticulations, he would proceed to extract the faulty tooth. 'Proceed' is the right term because if the patient was frightened or excessively noisy it was not always easy to do an extraction and at times the dentist would not hesitate to call upon bystanders to hold the struggling victim. There was no anaesthetic used. The dentist did not advertise as the doctors did with signs and shields and medals, but instead around his neck he wore strings of teeth which he had extracted. Whenever he had extracted a tooth, that tooth would be picked up, carefully cleaned, and a hole drilled through it. It would then be threaded on to a string to add one more testimony to the skill of the dentist who had pulled so many.

It used to annoy us considerably when patients on whom we had lavished much time and care, and to whom we had given the very latest treatment and prescribed expensive drugs, crept surreptitiously into the back entrance of the old Chinese doctor's premises for treatment by him. We claimed that we cured the patient. The quack claimed that he cured. But the patient said nothing, he was too glad to be free of his illness.

As we became more and more advanced in our studies and walked the wards of the hospital we had on frequent occasions to go out with a full qualified doctor to treat people in their own homes, to assist at operations. Sometimes we had to descend the cliffs to inaccessible places, perhaps to some place where some poor unfortunate had fallen over and shattered bones or lacerated flesh almost beyond repair. We had visits to those who had floating homes upon the rivers. In the Kialing river there are people who live on houseboats, or even rafts of bamboo covered with matting on which they erect little huts. These swayed and bobbed at the bank of the river, and, unless we were careful, particularly at night, it was remarkably easy to miss one's footing or to stand firmly upon a loose piece of bamboo which merely sank beneath one. Then one was not at all cheered by the laughter of the inevitable crowd of small boys who always gathered on such unfortunate occasions. The old Chinese peasants were able to put up with an amazing amount of pain. They never complained and they were always grateful for what we could do for them.

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We used to go out of our way to help the old people, perhaps help to clean up their little hut, or prepare food for them, but with the younger generation things were not so pleasant. They were getting restive, they were getting strange ideas. The men from Moscow were circulating among them, preparing them for the advent of Communism. We knew it, but there was nothing we could do except to stand by and watch helplessly.

But before we became so qualified we had an enormous amount of study to do, study a whole diversity of subjects for as long as fourteen hours a day. Magnetism as well as Electricity, to quote just two. I well remember the first lecture I attended on Magnetism. Then it was a subject almost entirely unknown to me. It was perhaps as interesting in its way as that which I attended on Electricity. The lecturer was not really a very pleasant individual, but here is what happened.

Huang had pushed his way through the crowd to read notices on the board to see where we should go for the next class. He started reading, then, 'Hoy, Lobsang,' he called across to me, 'we've got a lecture on Magnetism this afternoon.' We were glad to see that we were in the same class because we had formed a very sincere friendship. We walked out into the quadrangle, across and into a classroom next door to that devoted to Electricity. We entered. Inside there was a lot of equipment much the same, it seemed to us, as that dealing with Electricity proper. Coils of wire, strange pieces of metal bent roughly to a horse shoe shape. Black rods, glass rods, and various glass boxes containing what looked like water, and bits of wood and lead. We took our places and the lecturer came in and stalked ponderously to his table. He was a heavy man, heavy in body, heavy in mind. Certainly he had a very good opinion of his own abilities, a far greater opinion of his abilities than his colleagues had of them! He too had been to America, and whereas some of the others of the tutorial staff had returned knowing how little they really knew, this one was utterly convinced that he knew everything; that his own brain was infallible. He took his place and for some reason picked up a wooden hammer and rapped violently on his desk. "Silence!" he roared, although there had not been a sound.

"We are going to do Magnetism, the first lecture for some of you on this absorbing subject," he said, he picked up one of the bars bent in the shape of a horseshoe. "This," he said, "has a field around it." I immediately thought of grazing horses. He said, "I am going to show you how to outline the field of the magnet with iron dust. Magnetism," he went on, "will activate each particle of this iron which will then draw for itself the exact outline of the force which motivates it."

I incautiously remarked to Huang who was sitting behind me, "But any fool can see it now, why tamper with it?"

The lecturer jumped up in a furious temper. "Oh," he said "the great lama from Tibet—who doesn't know the first thing about Magnetism or Electricity—can see a magnetic field, can he?" He stabbed a finger violently in my direction. "So, great lama, you can see this wonderful field can you? The only man in existence who can perhaps," he said sneeringly.

I stood up. "Yes, Honourable Lecturer I can see it very clearly," I said. "I can also see the lights around those wires."

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He took his wooden hammer again, brought it down with a succession of resounding crashes on his desk. "You lie " he said "no one can see it. If you are so clever come and draw it for me and then we will see what sort of a mess you make of it."

I sighed wearily as I went up to him, picked up the magnet and went to the blackboard with a piece of chalk. The magnet I put flat on the board then I drew around it the exact shape of the bluish light which I could see coming from the magnet. I drew, also, those lighter striations which were within the field itself. It was such a simple matter for me, I had been born with the ability, and I had had the ability increased in me by operations. There was absolutely dead silence when I had finished, and I turned round. The lecturer was watching me and his eyes were quite literally bulging.

"You've studied this before," he said, "it's a trick!"

"Honourable Lecturer," I replied, "until this day I have never seen one of these magnets."

He said, "Well, I do not know how you do it, but that is the correct field. I still maintain that it is a trick. I still maintain that in Tibet you learned only trickery. I do not understand it." He took the magnet from me, covered it with a sheet of thin paper, and on to the paper he sprinkled fine iron dust, with a finger he tapped on the paper and the dust took up the exact shape of that which I had drawn on the blackboard. He looked at it, he looked at my drawing, and he looked back at the outline in the iron filings. "I still do not believe you, man from Tibet," he said. "I still think that it is a trick."

He sat down wearily and propped his head in his hands, then with explosive violence, he jumped up and shot out his hand to me again. "You!" he said, "you said that you could see the field of that magnet. You also said, 'And I can see the light around those wires'."

"That is so," I replied. "I can. I can see them easily."

"Right!" he shouted at me, "now we can prove you wrong, prove you are a fake." He wheeled round, knocking over his chair in his temper. He hurried to a corner, bent down with a grunt picked up a box, with wires protruding in a coil from the top. He stood up and placed it on the table in front of me. "Now," he said, "now, here is a very interesting box known as a high-frequency box. You draw the field of that for me and I will believe in you; there you are, you draw that field." He looked at me as if to say "I'll dare you to."

I said, "All right. It's simple enough. Let us put it nearer the blackboard, otherwise I shall be doing it by memory."

He picked up one end of the table and I picked up the other and we moved it right up close to the blackboard. I took the chalk in my hand, and turned away to the board. "Oh," I said, "it's all gone." I looked in amazement because there were just wires, nothing else, no field. I turned towards him, his hand was on a switch. He had switched off the current, but there was a look of absolute stupefaction on his face.

"So!" he said, "you really can see that! Well, well, how remarkable." He switched on again and said, "Turn away from me and tell me when it is on and when it is off."

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I turned away from him and I was able to tell him, "Off, on, off."

He left it off then and sat in his chair in the attitude of a man whose faith has received a crushing blow. Then, abruptly, he said, "Class dismissed." Turning to me, "Not you. I want to speak to you alone." The others muttered with resentment. They had come for a lecture and they had found some interest, why should they be turned out now? He just shooed them out, taking one or two by the shoulders to hustle them more quickly. The lecturer's word was law. With the classroom emptied he said; "Now, tell me more of this. What sort of trick is it?"

I said, "It is not a trick. It is a faculty with which I was born and which was strengthened by a special operation. I can see auras. I can see your aura. From it I know that you do not want to believe, you do not want to believe that anyone has an ability which you have not. You want to prove me wrong."

"No," he said, "I do not want to prove you wrong. I want to prove that my own training, my own knowledge is right, and if you can see this aura then surely all that I have been taught is wrong."

"Not at all," I replied. "I say that all your training goes to prove the existence of an aura, because from the very little that I have already studied of Electricity in this college, it indicates to me that the human being is powered by electricity."

"What utter nonsense!" he said. "What absolute heresy." And he jumped to his feet. "Come with me to the Principal. We will get this thing settled!"

Dr. Lee was sitting at his desk, busily engaged with the papers of the college. He looked up mildly as we entered, peering over the top of his glasses. Then he removed them to see us the more clearly. "Reverend Principal," bawled the lecturer, "this man, this fellow from Tibet says that he can see the aura and that we all have auras. He is trying to tell me that he knows more than I do, the Professor of Electricity and Magnetism."

Dr. Lee mildly motioned for us to be seated, and then said, "Well, what is it precisely? Lobsang Rampa can see auras. That I know. Of what do you complain?"

The lecturer absolutely gaped in astonishment. "But, Reverend Principal," he exclaimed, "do YOU believe in such nonsense, such heresy, such trickery?"

"Most assuredly I do," said Dr. Lee, "for he comes of the highest in Tibet, and I have heard of him from the highest."

Po Chu looked really crestfallen. Dr. Lee turned to me and said, "Lobsang Rampa, I will ask you to tell us in your own words about this aura. Tell us as if we knew nothing whatever about the subject. Tell us so that we may understand and perhaps profit from your specialized experience."

Well, that was quite a different matter. I liked Dr. Lee, I liked the way he handled things. "Dr. Lee," I said, "when I was born it was with the ability to see people as they really were. They have around them an aura which betrays every fluctuation of thought, every variation in health, in mental or in spiritual conditions. This aura is the light caused



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by the spirit within. For the first couple of years of my life I thought everyone saw as I did, but I soon learned that it was not so. Then, as you are aware, I entered a lamasery at the age of seven and underwent special training. In that lamasery I was given a special operation to make me see with even greater clarity than that which I had seen before, but which also gave me additional powers.

"In the days before history was," I went on, "man had a Third Eye. Through his own folly man lost the power to use that sight and that was the purpose of my training at the lamasery in Lhasa." I looked at them and saw that they were taking it in very well. "Dr. Lee," I went on, "the human body is surrounded first of all by a bluish light, a light perhaps an inch, perhaps two inches thick. That follows and covers the whole of the physical body. It is what we call the etheric body and is the lowest of the bodies. It is the connection between the astral world and the physical. The intensity of the blue varies according to a person's health. Then beyond the body, beyond the etheric body too, there is the aura. It varies in size enormously depending on the state of evolution of the person concerned, depending also upon the standard of education of the person, and upon his thoughts. Your own aura is the length of a man away from you," I said to the Principal, "the aura of an evolved man.

"The human aura whatever its size, is composed of swirling bands of colours, like clouds of colours drifting on the evening sky. They alter with a person's thoughts. There are zones on the body, special zones, which produce their own horizontal bands of colour. Yesterday," I said, "when I was working in the library I saw some pictures in a book on some Western religious belief. Here there were portrayed figures which had auras around their heads. Does this mean the people of the West whom I had thought inferior to us in development can see auras, while we of the East cannot? These pictures of the people of the West," I carried on, "had auras only around their heads. But I can see not merely around the head, but around the whole body and around the hands, the fingers and the feet. It is a thing which I have always seen."

The Principal turned to Po Chu.

"There, you see, this is the information which I had before. I knew that Rampa had this power. He used this power on behalf of the leaders of Tibet. That is why he is studying with us so that, it is hoped, he can assist in the developing of a special device which will be of the greatest benefit to mankind as a whole in connection with the detection and cure of disease. What caused you to come here today?" he asked.

The lecturer was looking very thoughtful. He replied, "We were just commencing practical Magnetism, and before I could show anything, as soon as I spoke about fields, this man said that he could see the fields around the magnet which I knew to be utterly fantastic. So I invited him to demonstrate upon the blackboard. To my astonishment," he went on, "he was able to draw the field on the blackboard, and he was able also to draw the current field of a high frequency transformer, but when it was switched off he saw nothing. I am sure it was a trick." He looked defiantly at the Principal.

"No," said Dr. Lee, "indeed it was no trick. It was no trick at all. For this is known to me as the truth. Some years ago I met his Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, one of the

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cleverest men in Tibet, and he, out of the goodness of his heart, underwent certain tests, out of friendship for me, and he proved that he could do the same as can Lobsang Rampa. We were able—that is a special group of us—to make some serious researches into the matter. But, unfortunately, prejudice, conservatism, and jealousy prevented us from publishing our findings. It is a thing which I have regretted ever since.”

There was silence for a time. I thought how good it was of the Principal to declare his faith in me. The lecturer was looking really gloomy as if he had received an unexpected, unwelcome setback. He said, “If you have this power, why are you studying medicine?”

I replied, “I want to study medicine and I want to study science as well so that I may assist in the preparation of a device similar to that which I saw in the Chang Tang Highlands of Tibet.”

The Principal broke in, “Yes, I know that you were one of the men who went on that expedition. I should like to know more about that device.”

“Some time ago,” I said, “at the instigation of the Dalai Lama a small party of us went upwards into a hidden valley in the mountain ranges in the Chang Tang Highlands. Here we found a city dating back to long before recorded history, a city of a bygone race, a city partly buried in the ice of a glacier, but where the glacier had melted in the hidden valley, where it was warm, the buildings and the devices contained in the buildings were intact. One such apparatus was a form of box into which one could look and see the human aura, and from that aura, from the colours, from the general appearance, they could deduce the state of health of a person. More, they could see if a person was likely to be afflicted in the flesh by any disease because the probabilities showed in the same aura before it was manifest in the flesh. In the same way, the germs of coryza show in the aura long before they manifest in the flesh as a common cold. It is a far easier matter to cure a person when they are only just tinged with a complaint. The complaint, the disease, can then be eradicated before it obtains a hold.”

The Principal nodded and said, “This is most interesting. Go on.”

I went on: “I visualize a modern version of that old apparatus. I would like to assist in the preparation of a similar device so that even the most non-clairvoyant doctor or surgeon could look through this box and could see the aura of a person in colour. He could also have a matching chart and with that chart he would be able to know what was actually wrong with the person. He would be able to diagnose without any difficulty or inaccuracy at all.”

“But,” said the lecturer, “you are too late. We have X-rays already!”

“X-rays,” said Dr. Lee. “Oh, my dear fellow, they are useless for a purpose such as this. They merely show, grey shadows of the bones. Lobsang Rampa does not want to show the bones, he wants to show the life-force of the body itself. I understand precisely what he means and I am sure that the biggest difficulty with which he will be confronted will be prejudice and professional jealousy.” He turned to me again, “But how could one help in mental complaints with such a device?”

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“Reverend Principal,” I said, “if a person has split personality the aura shows very clearly indeed because it shows a dual aura, and I maintain that with suitable apparatus the two auras could be pushed into one—perhaps by high frequency electricity.”

Now I am writing this in the West and I am finding that there is much interest in these matters. Many medical men of the highest eminence have expressed interest but invariably they say that I must not mention their name as it would prejudice their reputation! These further few remarks may be of interest: have you ever seen power cables during a slight haze? If so, particularly in mountain areas, you will have seen a corona round the wires. That is, a faint light encircling the wires. If your sight is very good you will have seen the light flicker, wane and grow, wane and grow, as the current coursing through the wires alters in polarity. That is much the same as the human aura. The old people, our great, great, great-ancestors, evidently could see auras, or see halos, because they were able to paint them on pictures of saints. That surely, cannot be ascribed by any one as imagination because if it was imagination only why paint it on the head, why paint it on the head where there actually is a light? Modern science has already measured the waves of a brain, measured the voltage of a human body. There is, in fact, one very famous hospital where research was undertaken years ago into X-rays. The researchers found that they were taking pictures of a human aura, but they did not understand what they were taking, nor did they care, because they were trying to photograph bones, not colours on the outside of a body, and they looked upon this aura photograph as an unmitigated nuisance. Tragically the whole of the matter relating to aura photography was shelved, while they progressed with X-rays, which, in my quite humble opinion, is the wrong way. I am utterly confident that with a little research doctors and surgeons could be provided with the most wonderful aid of all towards curing the sick.

I visualize—as I did many years ago—a special apparatus which any doctor could carry with him in his pocket, and then he could produce it and view a patient through it in much the same way as one takes a piece of smoked glass to look at the sun. With this device he could see the patient’s aura, and by the striations of colour, or by irregularities in outline, he could see exactly what was wrong with the patient. That is not the most important thing, because it does not help to merely know what is wrong with a person, one needs to know how to cure him, and this he could do so easily with the device I have in mind, particularly in the case of those with mental afflictions.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Flying**

IT WAS a warm, sultry evening, with hardly a breeze. The clouds above the cliff upon which we were walking were perhaps two hundred feet above us, glowering cloud masses which reminded me of Tibet as they towered into fantastic shapes as imaginary mountain ranges. Huang and I had had a hard day in the dissecting rooms. Hard, because the cadavers there had been kept a long time, and the smell from them was just terrible. The smell of the decaying bodies, the smell of the antiseptic, and the other odors had really exhausted us. I wondered why I had ever had to come away from Tibet where the air was pure, and where men's thoughts were pure, too. After a time we had had enough of the dissecting rooms and we had washed and gone out to this cliff top. It was good, we thought, to walk in the evening and look upon nature. We looked upon other things as well because, by peering over the edge of the cliff, we could see the busy traffic on the river beneath.

We could see the coolies loading ships, eternally carrying their heavy bales with a long bamboo pole across their shoulders on each end of which would be loads of ninety pounds, heaped in panniers. The panniers weighed five pounds each, and so the coolie would be carrying not less than one hundred and ninety pounds all day long. Life for them was hard, they worked until they died, and they died at quite a young age, worn out, human draught horses, treated worse than the beasts in the fields. And when they were worn out and fell dead sometimes they ended up in our dissecting rooms to continue the work of good, and this time by providing material for embryo doctors and surgeons who would acquire skill with which to treat living bodies.

We turned away from the edge of the cliff and faced into the very slight breeze which carried the sweet scent of the trees and the flowers. There was a slight grove of trees almost ahead, and we altered our steps slightly in order to go to them. A few yards from the cliff we stopped, aware of some strange sense of impending calamity, some sense of unease and tension, something inexplicable. We looked at each other questioningly, unable to decide what it was. Huang said, dubiously. "That cannot be thunder."

"Of course not," I replied. "It is something very strange something we know nothing

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about.” We stood uncertainly, head on one side, listening. We looked about us, looked at the ground, at the trees, and then we looked at the clouds. It was from there that the noise was coming, a steady “brum-brumbrum” getting louder and louder, harsher and harsher. As we gazed upwards we saw, through a hole in the cloud base, a dark winged shape flit across. It was gone into the opposite cloud almost before we were aware of its presence.

“My!” I shouted. “One of the Gods of the Sky is come to take us off.” There was nothing we could do. We just stood wondering what would happen next. The noise was thunderous, a noise of a sort that neither of us had heard before. Then, as we watched, a huge shape appeared, flinging wisps of clouds from it as if impatient of even the slight restraint of the clouds. It flashed out of the sky, skimmed straight over our heads, over the edge of the cliff with a sickening shriek, and with a buffet of tortured air. The noise ended and there was silence. We stood absolutely aghast, absolutely chilled, looking at each other.

Then, upon a common impulse, we turned and ran toward the cliff edge to see what had happened to the thing from the sky, the thing which was so strange and so noisy. At the edge we flung ourselves prone and peered cautiously over at the sparkling river. There upon a sandy strip of ground was the strange, winged monster, now at rest. As we looked it coughed with a spurt of flame and a burst of black smoke. It made us jump and turn pale, but this was not the strangest thing. To our incredulous amazement and horror a piece opened in the side and two men got out.

At that time I thought that was the most wonderful thing I had ever seen, but we were wasting time up there. We sprang to our feet and raced for the path leading down. Down we sped through the street of steps, ignoring traffic, ignoring all courtesy, in our mad rush to get to the water’s edge.

Down by the side of the river we could have stamped our feet with frustrated anger. There was not a boat to be had, not a boatman, no one. They had all flocked across the water to be where we wanted to be. But, yes! There was a boat behind a boulder. We turned towards it with the intention of launching it and going across, but as we reached it we saw an old, old man coming down a steep path carrying nets.

“Hey, father,” Huang shouted, “take us across.”

“Well,” the old man said, “I don’t want to go. What’s it worth to you?” He tossed his nets in the boat and leaned against the side, old battered pipe in his mouth. He crossed his legs and looked as if he could have stayed there all night, just chatting.

We were in a frenzy of impatience. “Come, on, old man, what’s your charge?” The old man named a fantastic sum, a sum which would have bought his rotten old boat, we thought. But we were in a flurry of excitement, we would have given almost anything we had to get across to the other side. Huang bargained.

I said, “Oh, don’t let’s waste time. Let’s give him half what he asks.” The old man jumped at it. It was about ten times more than he had expected. He jumped at it, so we rushed for his boat.



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"Steady on, young gentlemen, steady on. You'll wreck my boat," he said.

"Oh, come on, grandpa," said Huang, "hurry up. The day is getting old." The old fellow leisurely got aboard, creaking with rheumatism, grunting. Slowly he picked up a pole, and poled us out into the stream. We were fidgeting, trying mentally to move the boat more rapidly, but nothing would hurry the old man.

In the centre of the stream some eddy of current caught us and swung us around, then he got the boat on the right course again, and we went across to the far bank. To save time, as we were approaching, I counted out the money and pushed it at the old man. He was certainly quick to take it. Then, without waiting for the boat to touch, we jumped knee-deep in water and ran up the bank.

Before us was that wonderful machine, that incredible machine, which had come from the sky, and which had brought men with it. We looked at it in awe, and were amazed at our own temerity in daring to approach like this. Other people were there, too, but they were staying a respectable distance away. We moved forward, we moved close to it, under it, feeling the rubber tires on the wheels, punching them. We moved to the stern and saw that here there was no wheel, but a bar of springy metal with a thing like a shoe at the end.

"Ah," I said, "that'll be a skid to slow it down as it lands. We had a thing like that on my kites." Gingerly, half frightened, we fingered the side of the machine, we looked with incredulity as we found that it was a sort of fabric, painted in some way and stretched on a wooden frame. Now, this really was something! About half way between the wings and the tail we touched a panel, and we nearly fainted with shock as it opened, and a man dropped lightly to the ground.

"Well," he said, "you certainly seem to be very interested."

"We are indeed," I replied. "I've flown a thing like this, a silent one in Tibet."

He looked at me and his eyes went wide. "Did you say in Tibet?" he asked.

"I did," I answered.

Huang broke in, "My friend is a living Buddha, a lama, studying in Chungking. He used to fly in man-lifting kites," he said.

The man from the air machine looked interested. "That is fascinating," he said. "Will you come inside where we can sit down and talk?" He turned and led the way in. Well, I thought, I have had many experiences. If this man can trust himself inside the thing—so can I. So I entered as well, with Huang following my example. I had seen a thing larger than this in the Highlands of Tibet, in which the Gods of the Sky had flown straight out of the world. But that had been different, not so frightening, because the machine that they had used had been silent, but this had roared and torn at the air, and shook.

Inside there were seats, quite comfortable seats, too. We sat down. That man, he kept asking me questions about Tibet, questions which I thought absolutely stupid. Tibet was so commonplace, so ordinary, and here he was, in the most marvelous machine that

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ever had been, talking of Tibet. Eventually, after much time and with a great amount of trouble, we got some information out of him instead.

This was a machine that they called an aeroplane, a device which had engines to throw it through the sky. It was the engines which made the noise, he said. This particular one was made by the Americans and it had been bought by a Chinese firm in Shanghai who had been thinking of starting an airline from Shanghai to Chungking. The three men that we had seen were the pilot, a navigator, and engineer, on a trial flight. The pilot—the man to whom we were talking—said, “We are to interest notabilities and to give them a chance of flying so that they may approve of our venture.”

We nodded, thinking how marvelous it was, and how we wished that we were notabilities and would have a chance of flying.

He went on, “You from Tibet, you’re indeed a notability. Would you like to try this machine with us?”

I said, “My goodness me, I would as quickly as you like!”

He motioned to Huang, and asked him to step outside, saying that he couldn’t go.

“Oh no,” I said, “Oh, no. If one goes, the other goes.” So Huang was allowed to stay (he did not thank me later!). The two men who had got out before moved toward the plane and there were a lot of hand signals. They did something to the front, then there was a loud “bam” and they did something more. Suddenly there was a shocking noise, and terrible vibration. We clung on, thinking that there had been some accident, and we were being shaken to pieces.

“Hang on,” said the man. We couldn’t hang on more tightly, so it was quite superfluous of him. “We are going to take off,” he said. There was a simply appalling racket, jolts, bumps, and thuds, worse than the first time I went up in a man-lifting kite. This was far worse because in addition to the jolts, there was noise, abominable noise. There was a final thud, which nearly drove my head between my shoulders, and then a sensation as if someone were pressing me hard beneath and at the back. I managed to raise my head and look out of the window at the side. We were in the air, we were climbing. We saw the river lengthening into a silver thread, the two rivers joining together to make one. We saw the sampans and the junks as little toys like little chips of wood floating. Then we looked at Chungking, at the streets, at the steep streets up which we had toiled so laboriously.

From this height they looked level, but over the side of the cliff the terraced fields still clung precariously at the appalling steep slope. We saw the peasants toiling away, oblivious to us. Suddenly there was a whiteness, complete and utter obscurity, even the engine noises seemed muffled. We were in the clouds. A few minutes with streamers of cloud rushing by the windows, and the light became stronger. We emerged into the pale blue of the sky, flooded with the golden sunlight. As we looked down it was like gazing down on a frozen sea of snow, scintillatingly white, dazzling, eye-hurting with the intensity of the glare. We climbed and climbed, and I became aware that the man in charge of the machine was talking to me. “This is higher than you have been before,” he said,

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“much higher than you have been before.”

“Not at all,” I replied, “because when I started in a man-lifting kite I was already seventeen thousand feet high.” That surprised him. He turned to look out of the side window, the wing dipped, and we slid sideways in a screaming dive. Huang turned a pale green, a horrible colour, and unmentionable things happened to him.

He lurched out of his seat, and lay face down on the bottom of the plane. He was not a pleasant sight, but nothing pleasant was happening to him. I was always immune to air-sickness, and I felt nothing at all except mild pleasure at the maneuvers. Not Huang, he was frightfully upset by it. By the time we landed he was just a quivering mass who occasionally emitted a painful groan. Huang was not a good airman! Before we landed the man shut off his engines and we drifted in the sky, gradually getting lower, and lower.

There was only the “swish” of the wind past our wings, and only the drumming of the fabric at the sides of the plane to tell us that we were in a man-made machine. Suddenly, as we were getting quite near the ground, the man switched on his engines again and we were once more deafened by the ear-shattering roar of many hundreds of horsepower. A circle, and we came in to land. A violent bump, and a screech from the tail skid, and we clattered to a stop. Again the engines were switched off and the pilot and I rose to get out. Poor Huang, he was not ready to rise. We had to carry him out and lay him on the sand to recover.

I am afraid that I was quite hard-hearted; Huang was lying face down in the yellow sand of the spit upon which we had landed in the middle of the mile-wide river. He was lying face down, making peculiar sounds and motions, and I was glad that he was not able to rise. Glad, because it gave me a good excuse to stop and talk with the man who had flown the machine. Talk we did. Unfortunately he wanted to talk about Tibet. What was the country like for flying? Could planes land there? Could an army land there dropped by parachute? Well, I hadn’t the vaguest idea what parachutes were, but I said “No,” to be on the safe side!

We came to an arrangement. I told him about Tibet and he told me about aircraft. Then he said “I would feel deeply honoured if you would meet some of my friends who also are interested in the Tibetan mysteries.” Well, what did I want to meet his friends for? I was just a student at the college, and I wanted to become a student of the air, and all this fellow was thinking of was the social side of things.

In Tibet I had been one of the very few who had flown. I had flown high above the mountains in a man-lifting kite, but although the sensation had been wonderful, and the silence soothing, yet the kite had still been tethered to the earth. It could merely go up in the air, it could not fly over the land, wherever the pilot wanted to fly. It was tethered like the yak at pasture. I wanted to know more of this roaring machine that flew as I had dreamed of flying, that could fly anywhere, to any part of the world the pilot told me, and all he was bothering about was—talk about Tibet.

For a time it seemed to be a deadlock. We sat on the sand facing each other with poor Huang groaning away to the side, and not receiving any sympathy from us. Eventually

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we came to an arrangement. I agreed to meet his friends and tell them a few things about Tibet and about the mysteries of Tibet. I agreed to give a few lectures about it.

He, in his turn, would take me in the aeroplane again and explain how the thing worked. We walked around the machine first, he pointed out various things. The fins, the rudder, the elevators—all sorts of things. Then we got in and sat down, side by side, right in the front. In front of each of us now there was a kind of stick with half a wheel attached to it. The wheel could be rotated, left or right, while the whole stick could be pulled back or pushed forward. He explained to me how the pulling back would make a plane rise, and pushing forward would make it sink, and turning would also turn the machine. He pointed out the various knobs and switches. Then the engines were started and behind glass dials I saw quivering pointers which altered their position as the rates of the engines varied. We spent a long time, he did his part well, he explained everything.

Then, with the engines stopped, we got out and he took off inspection covers and pointed out various details. Carburetors, sparking plugs, and many other things. That evening I met his friends as promised. They were, of course, Chinese. They were all connected with the army. One of them told me that he knew Chiang Kai-Shek well, and, he said, the Generalissimo was trying to raise the nucleus of a technical army. Trying to raise the general standard of the services in the Chinese army. He said that in a few days' time one or two planes, smaller planes, would arrive at Chungking. They were planes, he told me, which had been purchased from the Americans. After that I had little thought in my head beyond flying. How could I get to one of these craft? How could I make it go up in the air? How could I learn to fly?

Huang and I were leaving the hospital a few days later when out of the heavy clouds stretching above our heads darted two silver shapes, two single-seater fighter planes which had come from Shanghai as promised. They circled over Chungking, and circled again. Then, as if they had just spotted exactly where to land, they dived down in close formation. We wasted no time. We hurried down the street of steps, and made our way across to the sand. There were two Chinese pilots standing beside their machines, busily engaged in polishing off marks of their flight through dirty clouds. Huang and I approached them, and made our presence known to the leader of the two, a Captain Po Ku. Huang had made it very clear to me that nothing would induce him to go up into the air again. He had thought that he would die after his first—and last—flight.

Captain Po Ku said, "Ah, yes, I have heard about you. I was actually wondering how to get in touch with you." And I was much flattered thereby. We talked for a time. He pointed out the differences between this machine and the passenger machine which we had seen before. This, as he pointed out, was a machine with a single seat, and one engine, but the other had been a three-engine type. We had little time to stay then, because we had to deal with our rounds, and it was with extreme reluctance that we left.

The next day we had half a day off and we made our way again, as early as possible, to the two planes. I asked the Captain when he was going to teach me to fly as promised. He said, "Oh, I could not possibly do that. I am just here by order of Chiang Kai-Shek. We

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are showing these planes.” I kept on at him for that day, and when I saw him the day after he said, “You can sit in the machine, if you like. You will find that quite satisfying. Sit in and try the controls. This is how they work, look.” And he stood on the wing root and pointed out the controls to me, showed me how they worked. They were much the same as those of the three-engine machine, but of course much simpler. That evening we took him and his companion—they left a guard of police on the machine—to the temple which was our home, and although I worked on them very hard I could not get any statement at all about when they were going to teach me to fly.

He said, “Oh, you may have to wait a long time. It takes months of training. It’s impossible to fly a thing straight off as you want to. You would have to go to ground school, you would have to fly in a dual-seat machine, and you would have to do many hours before you were allowed in a plane such as ours.”

The next day at the end of the afternoon we went down again. Huang and I crossed the river and landed on the sand. The two men were quite alone with their machines. The two machines were many yards apart. Apparently there was something wrong with that of Po Ku’s friend, because he had got the engine cowling off, and tools were all over the place. Po Ku himself had the engine of his machine turning over. He was adjusting it. He stopped it, made an adjustment, and started it again. It went “phut-phut-phut” and did not run at all evenly. He was oblivious to us, as he stood on the wing, and fiddled about with the engine.

Then, as the motor purred evenly, smoothly, like a well-pleased cat, he straightened up, wiping his hands on a piece of oily waste. He looked happy. He was turning to speak to us when his companion called urgently to him from the other plane. Po Ku went to stop the motor but the other pilot waved his hands frantically, so he just dropped to the ground from the wing and hurried off.

I looked at Huang. I said, “Ah ha, he said I could sit in, did he not? Well, I will sit in.”

“Lobsang,” said Huang, “You are not thinking of anything rash are you?”

“Not at all,” I replied. “I could fly that thing, I know all about it.”

“But, man,” said Huang, “you’ll kill yourself.”

“Rubbish!” I said. “Haven’t I flown kites? Haven’t I been up in the air, and been free from airsickness?” Poor Huang looked a bit crestfallen at that because his own airman-ship was not at all good.

I looked toward the other plane, but the two pilots were far too busy to bother with me. They were kneeling on the sand doing something to part of an engine, obviously they were quite engrossed. There was no one else about except Huang, so—I walked up to the plane. As I had seen the others do I kicked away the chocks in front of the wheels and hastily jumped in as the plane began to roll. The controls had been explained to me a few times and I knew which was the throttle, I knew what to do. I slammed it hard forward, hard against the stop, so hard that I nearly sprained my left wrist. The engine roared under full power as if it would tear itself free. Then we were off absolutely speeding



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down that strip of yellow sand. I saw a flash where water and sand met. For a moment I felt panic, then I remembered: pull back. I pulled back on the control column hard, the nose rose, the wheels just kissed the waves and made spray, we were up. It felt as if an immense, powerful hand was pressing beneath me, pushing me up.

The engine roared and I thought, "Must not let it go too fast, must throttle it back or it will fall to pieces." So I pulled the throttle control a quarter way back and the engine note became less. I looked over the side of the plane, and had quite a shock. A long way below were the white cliffs of Chungking. I was high, really high, so high that I could hardly pick out where I was. I was getting higher all the time. White cliffs, of Chungking? Where? Goodness! If I go any higher I shall fly out of the world, I thought. Just then there was a terrible shuddering, and I felt as if I was falling to pieces. The control in my hand was wrenched from my grasp. I was flung against the side of the machine which tilted, and lurched violently, and went spinning down to earth. For a moment I knew utter fright. I said to myself "You've done it this time, Lobsang, my boy. You've been too clever for yourself. A few more seconds and they'll scrape you off the rock. Oh, why did I ever leave Tibet?"

Then I reasoned out from what I had heard and from my kite flying experience. A spin; controls cannot operate, I must give full throttle to try and get some directional control. No sooner had I thought of it than I pushed the throttle right forward again, and the engine roared anew.

Then I grabbed the wildly thrashing control and braced myself against the back of the seat. With my hands and my knees I forced that control forward. The nose dropped startingly, as if the bottom had fallen out of the world. I had no safety belt and if I had not been clinging on very tightly to the controls I would have been shot out. It felt as if there were ice in my veins, as if someone was pushing snow down my back. My knees became strangely weak, the engine roared, the whine getting higher and higher. I was bald, but I am sure that, had I not been, the hair would have stood absolutely on end in spite of the airstream.

"Ouch, fast enough," I said to myself, and gently, oh, so gently, in case it broke off, I eased back that control. Gradually, terrifying slowly, the nose came up, and up, but in my excitement I forgot to level off. Up went the nose until the strange feeling made me look down, or was it up? I found the whole earth was above my head! For a moment I was completely at a loss to know what had happened.

Then the plane gave a lurch and turned over into a dive again, so that the earth, the hard world beneath, was directly in front of the propeller. I had turned a somersault. I had flown upside down, braced on hands and knees in the cockpit, hanging upside down with no safety belt, and definitely without much hope. I admit I was frightened but I thought, "Well, if I can stay on the back of a horse, I can stay in a machine." So I let the nose drop some more and then gradually pulled back the stick. Again I felt as if a mighty hand was pushing me; this time, though, I pulled back the stick slowly, carefully, watching the ground all the time, and I was able to level off the plane in even flight.

For a moment or two I just sat there, mopping the perspiration from my brow, think-

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ing what a terrible affair it had been; first going straight down, then going straight up, then flying upside down, and now I did not know where I was. I looked over the side, I peered at the ground, I turned round and round, and I hadn't got the vaguest idea where I was. I might have been in the Gobi Desert. At last, when I had just about given up hope, inspiration struck me—just about everything in the cockpit had as well!—the river, where was it? Obviously, I thought, if I can find the river then I either go left or right, eventually I will go somewhere.

So I turned the plane in a gentle circle, peering into the distance. At last I saw a faint silver thread on the horizon. I turned the plane in that direction, and kept it there. I pushed forward the throttle to get there more quickly, and then I pulled the throttle back again in case something broke off with all the noise I was making. I wasn't feeling too happy at this time. I had found that I was doing everything in extremes. I had pushed forward the throttle, the nose would rise with alarming rapidity, or I would pull back the throttle and the nose would fall with even more alarming suddenness. So now I was trying everything gently; it was a new attitude which I had adopted for the occasion.

When I was right over it, I turned again, and flew along that river, seeking the cliffs of Chungking. It was most bewildering. I could not find the place. Then I decided to come lower. Lower I circled, and circled, peering over the side looking for those white cliffs with the gashes which were the steep steps, looking for the terraced fields. They were hard to find. At last it dawned upon me that all those little specks on the river were the ships about Chungking. A little paddle steamer, the sampans, and the junks. So I went lower still. Then I saw a mere sliver of sand. Down I went spiraling down like a hawk spiraling down in search of prey. The sandy spit became larger, and larger. Three men were looking up, petrified with horror, three men, Po Ku and his fellow pilot and Huang, feeling quite certain, as they later told me, that they had lost a plane. But now I was fairly confident, too confident. I had got up in the air, I had flown upside down, I had found Chungking. Now, I thought I am the world's best pilot. Just then I had an itch in my left leg where there was a bad scar from the time when I was burned in the lamasery. Unconsciously I suppose I twitched my leg; the plane rocked, a tornado of wind struck my left cheek, the nose went down as the wing tilted, and soon I was in a screaming sideslip. Once again I pushed forward the throttle and gingerly pulled back on the control column. The plane shuddered and the wings vibrated. I thought they were going to fall off! By a miracle they held.

The plane bucked like an angry horse, and then slid into level flight. My heart was fairly pounding at the effort and with the fright. I flew again in a circle over the little patch of sand. "Well, now," I thought to myself, "I've got to land the thing. How am I going to do that?" The river here was a mile wide. To me it looked as if it was inches and the little patch on which I had to land was diminutive.

I circled wondering what to do. Then I remembered what they had told me, how they had explained flying. So I looked for some smoke to see which way the wind was blowing, because they had told me I had to land into wind. It was blowing upriver, I saw by a bonfire which had been lit on the bank of the river. I turned and flew upstream, up many miles, and then I reversed my course, so that I was facing down-river and into wind. As I

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flew towards Chungking I gradually eased back the throttle so that I was going slower and slower, and so that the plane would sink and sink.

Once I eased it back too much, and the machine stalled and rocked, and dropped like a stone, leaving my heart and stomach, or so it felt, hanging on a cloud. Very quickly indeed I pushed forward the throttle and pulled back the control column, but I had to turn round again and make my way up-river once more, and start all over again. I was getting tired of this flying business, and wishing that I had never started it at all. It was one thing, I thought, to get it up in the air, but a very different thing to get down—in one piece.

The roaring of the engine was becoming monotonous. I was thankful to see Chungking coming in sight again. I was low now, going slowly, just above the river, between huge rocks which often looked white, but now, through the oblique rays of the sun, looked a greenish black. As I approached the sandy spit in the middle of the too narrow river—I could have done with several miles of width!—I saw three figures hopping up and down with excitement. I was so interested watching them that I just forgot all about landing. By the time it had occurred to me that this was the place I had to alight, it had passed beneath my wheels, beneath the tail skid. So, with a sigh of weary resignation, I pushed that hated throttle forward to gain speed. I pulled back on the control to gain height, and went over in a sharp left swing. Now I was facing up-river again, sick of the scenery, sick of Chungking, sick of everything.

I turned once more down-river, and into wind. Across to the right I saw a beautiful sight. The sun was going down, and it was red, red and huge. Going down. It reminded me that I had to go down too, and I thought I would go down and crash and die, and I felt to myself that I was not yet ready to join the Gods, there was so much to be done. This reminded me of the Prophecy, and I knew that I had nothing more to worry about. The Prophecy! Of course I would land safely and all would be well.

Thinking of that almost made me forget Chungking. Here, it was nearly beneath the left wing. I gently eased on the rudder-bar to make sure that the sandy spit of yellow sand was dead in front of the engine. I slowed down more, and more. The plane gradually sank. I pulled back the throttle so that I was about ten feet above the water as the engine note died. To be sure that there was no fire if I crashed I switched off the engine. Then, very, very gently, I pushed forward the control column to lose more height. Straight in front of the engine I saw sand and water as if I was aiming directly at it. So gently I pulled back the control column

There was a tug, and a jar, then a bounce. Once again a scraping noise, a tug, and a jar, and then a rumbling creak as if everything was falling to pieces. I was on the ground. The plane had just about landed itself. For a moment I sat quite still, hardly believing that it was all over, that the noise of the engine was not really there, but that it was just imagination in my ears. Then I looked around. Po Ku and his companion and Huang came racing up, red in the face with the effort, breathless. They skidded to a stop just beneath me. Po Ku looked at me, looked at the plane, looked at me again. Then he went really pale-faced with shock and utter relief. He was so relieved that he was quite unable to be

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angry.

After a long, long interval Po Ku said, "That settles it. You will have to join the Force or I shall get into very serious trouble."

"All right," I said, "suits me fine. There's nothing in this flying business. But I would like to learn the approved method!"

Po Ku turned red in the face again, and then laughed. "You're a born pilot, Lobsang Rampa," he said. "You'll get your chance to learn to fly." So that was the first step toward leaving Chungking. As a surgeon and as a pilot my services would be of use elsewhere.

Later in the day, when we were talking over the whole matter, I asked Po Ku why, if he had been so worried, he did not come up in the other plane to show me the way back. He said, "I wanted to, but you had flown off with the starter and all, so I could not."

Huang, of course, spread the story, as did Po Ku and his companion, and for several days I was the talk of the college and of the hospital, much to my disgust. Dr. Lee sent for me officially to administer a severe reprimand, but officially to congratulate me. He said that he would have liked to have done a thing like that himself in his younger years, but "There were no aircraft in my young days, Rampa. We had to go by horse or by foot." He said that now it fell to the lot of a wild Tibetan to give him the best thrill that he had had for years. He added, "Rampa, what did their auras look like as you flew over them and they thought that you were going to crash on them?" He had to laugh as I said that they looked completely terrified and their auras had contracted to a pale blue blot, shot through with maroon red streaks.

I said, "I am glad there was no one there to see what my aura was like. It must have been terrible. Certainly it felt so."

Not so long after this I was approached by a representative of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek and offered the opportunity to learn to fly properly and be commissioned in the Chinese Forces. The officer who came to me said, "If we have time before the Japanese invade seriously, we would like to establish a special corps so that those people who are injured and cannot be moved can receive help from men of the air who are also surgeons." So it came about that I had other things to study beside human bodies. I had to study oil circulation as well as the circulation of the blood. I had to study the framework of aircraft as well as the skeletons of humans. They were of equal interest and they had many points in common.

So the years went on, and I became a qualified doctor and a qualified pilot, trained in both, working in a hospital and flying in my spare time. Huang dropped out of it. He was not interested in flying and the mere thought of a plane made him turn pale. Po Ku, instead, stayed with me because it had been seen how well we got on together and we made indeed a satisfactory team.

Flying was a wonderful sensation. It was glorious to be high up in an aeroplane, and to switch off the engine and to glide and to soar in the way that the birds did. It was so much like astral travelling which I do and which anyone else can do provided their heart

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is reasonably healthy and they will have the patience to persevere.

Do you know what astral travelling is? Can YOU recall the pleasures of soaring, of drifting over the house top going across the oceans, perhaps, to some far distant land? We can all do it. It is merely when the more spiritual part of the body casts aside its physical covering, and soars into other dimensions and visits other parts of the world at the end of its "silver cord." There is nothing magical about it, nothing wrong. It is natural and wholesome, and in days gone by all men could travel astrally without let or hindrance. The Adepts of Tibet and many of India travel in their astral from place to place, and there is nothing strange in it. In religious books the world over, the Bibles of all religions, there is mention of such things as "the silver cord" and the "golden bowl." This so-called silver cord is merely a shaft of energy, radiant energy, which is capable of infinite extension. It is not a material cord like a muscle, or artery, or piece of string, but it is life itself, is the energy which connects the physical body and the astral body.

Man has many bodies. For the moment we are interested only in the physical and in the next stage, the astral. We may think that when we are in a different state we can walk through walls, or fall through floors. We can, but we can only walk or fall through floors of a different density. In the astral stage things of this everyday world are no barrier to our passage. Doors of a house would not keep one in or keep one out. But in the astral world there are also doors and walls which to us in the astral are as solid, as containing, as the doors and walls of this earth are to the physical body.

Have you seen a ghost? If so it was probably an astral entity, perhaps an astral projection of someone you know, or someone visiting you from another part of the world. You may, at some time, have had a particularly vivid dream. You may have dreamed that you were floating like a balloon, up into the sky, held by a string, a cord. You may have been able to look down from the sky, from the other end of this cord, and have found that your body was rigid, pallid, immovable. If you kept at that disconcerting sight you may have found yourself floating, floating off, drifting like a piece of thistledown on a breeze. A little later you may have found yourself in some distant land, or some remote district known to you. If you thought anything about it in the morning you would probably put it down as a dream. It was astral travelling.

Try this: when you go to sleep at night think vividly that you are going to visit someone you know well. Think of how you are going to visit that person. It may be someone in the same town. Well, as you are lying down keep quite still, relaxed, at ease. Shut your eyes and imagine yourself floating off the bed, out through the window, and floating over the street—knowing that nothing can hurt you—knowing that you cannot fall. In your imagination follow the exact line that you will take, street by street, until you get to the house that you want. Then imagine how you are going to enter the house. Doors do not bother you now, remember, nor do you have to knock. You will be able to see your friend, the person whom you have come to visit.

That is, you will be able to if your motives are pure. There is no difficulty at all, nothing dangerous, nothing harmful. There is only one law: your motives must be pure. Here it is again, repetition if you like, but it is much better to approach it from one or two



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viewpoints so that you can see how utterly simple this is. As you lie upon your bed, alone with no one to disturb you, with your bedroom door locked so that no one can come in, keep calm. Imagine that you are gently disengaging from your body. There is no harm, nothing can hurt you. Imagine that you hear various little creaks and that there are numerous jolts, small jolts, as your spiritual force leaves the physical and solidifies above.

Imagine that you are forming a body the exact counterpart of your physical body, and that it is floating above the physical, weightlessly. You will experience a slight swaying, a minute rise and fall. There is nothing to be afraid of, there is nothing to worry about. This is natural, harmless. As you keep calm you will find that gradually your now-freed spirit will drift until you float a few feet off. Then you can look down at yourself, at your physical body. You will see that your physical and your astral bodies are connected by a shining silver cord, a bluish silver cord, which pulsates with life, with the thoughts that go from physical to astral, and from astral to physical. Nothing can hurt you so long as your thoughts are pure.

Nearly everyone has had an experience of astral traveling. Cast your mind back and think if you can remember this: have you ever been asleep and had the impression that you were swaying, falling, falling, and then you awoke with a jolt just before you crashed into the ground? That was astral travelling done the wrong way, the unpleasant way. There is no need for you to suffer that inconvenience Or unpleasantness. It was caused by the difference in vibration between the physical and the astral bodies. It may have been that when you were floating down to enter the physical body after making a journey, some noise, some draught, or some interruption, caused a slight discrepancy in position and the astral body came down to the physical body not exactly in the right position, so there was a jolt, a jar.

You can liken it to stepping off a moving bus. The bus, which is, let us say, the astral body, is doing ten miles an hour. The ground, which we will call the physical body, does not move. In the short space between leaving the bus platform and hitting the ground you have to slow down or experience a jerk. So, if you have had this falling sensation; then you have had astral travelling even if you did not know it, because the jerk of coming back to what one would call a "bad landing" would erase the memory of what you did, of what you saw. In any event, without training you could have been asleep when you were astral travelling.

So you would have merely thought that you had dreamed, "I dreamed last night that I visited such-and-such a place, and saw so-and-so." How many times have you said that?

All a dream! But was it? With a little practice you can do astral travelling when you are fully awake and you can retain the memory of what you saw, and what you did. The big disadvantage, of course, with astral travelling is just this: when you travel in the astral you can take nothing with you, nor can you take anything back, so it is a waste of time to think that you will go somewhere by astral traveling, because you cannot even take money, not even a handkerchief, but only your spirit.

People with bad hearts should not practice astral traveling. For them it could be dangerous. But there is no danger whatever for those with sound hearts, because so long as

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our motives are pure, so long as you do not contemplate evil or gain over another, no harm whatever can happen.

Do you want to travel astrally? This is the easiest way to set about it. First of all remember this: it is the first law of psychology, and it stipulates that in any battle between the will and the imagination, the imagination always wins. So always imagine that you can do a thing; and if you imagine it strongly enough you can do it. You can do anything. Here is an example to make it clear.

Anything that you really imagine you can do, that you can do, no matter how difficult or impossible it is to the onlooker. Anything which your imagination tells you is impossible, then, to you it is impossible no matter how much your will tries to force you on. Think of it in this way: there are two houses thirty-five feet high, and ten feet apart. A plank is stretched between them at roof level. The plank is, perhaps, two feet wide. If you want to walk across that plank your imagination would cause you to picture all the hazards, the wind causing you to sway, or perhaps something in the wood causing you to stumble. You might, your imagination says, become giddy, but no matter the cause your imagination tells you that the journey would be impossible for you, you would fall and be killed.

Well, no matter how hard you try, if you once imagine that you cannot do it, then do it you cannot, and that simple little walk across the plank would be an impossible journey for you. No amount of will power at all would enable you to cross safely. Yet, if that plank was on the ground you could walk its length without the slightest hesitation. Which wins in a case like this? Will power? Or imagination Again, if you imagine that you can walk the plank between the two houses, then you can do it easily, it does not matter at all if the wind is blowing or even if the plank shakes, so long as you imagine that you can cross safely. People walk tight ropes, perhaps they even cross on a cycle, but no will power would make them do it. It is just imagination.

It is an unfortunate thing that we have to call this "imagination," because, particularly in the west, that indicates something fanciful, something unbelievable, and yet imagination is the strangest force on earth. Imagination can make a person think he is in love, and love thus becomes the second strongest force. We should call it controlled imagination. Whatever we call it we must always remember: in any battle between the will and the imagination, the imagination ALWAYS WINS. In the east we do not bother about will power, because will power is a snare, a trap, which chains men to earth. We rely on controlled imagination, and we get results.

If you have to go to the dentist for an extraction, you imagine the horrors that await you there, the absolute agony, you imagine every step of the extraction. Perhaps the insertion of the needle, and the jerking as the anaesthetic is pumped in, and then the probing about of the dentist. You imagine yourself fainting, or screaming, or bleeding to death, or something. All nonsense, of course, but very, very real to you, and when you get into the chair you suffer a lot of pain which is quite unnecessary. This is an example of imagination wrongly used. That is not controlled imagination, it is imagination run wild, and no one should permit that.

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Women will have been told shocking tales about the pains, the dangers, of having children. At the time of the birth the mother-to-be, thinking of all these pains to come, tenses herself, makes herself rigid, so that she gets a twinge of pain. That convinces her that what she imagined is perfectly true, that having a baby is a very painful affair, so she tenses some more, and gets another pain, and in the end she has a perfectly horrible time. Not so in the east.

People imagine that having a baby is easy, and painless, and so it is. Women in the east have their babies, and perhaps go on with their housework a few hours after, because they know how to control imagination.

You have heard of “brainwashing” as practiced by the Japanese, and by the Russians? That is a process of preying upon one’s imagination, and of causing one to imagine things which the captor wants one to imagine. This is the captor’s method of controlling the prisoner’s imagination, so that the prisoner will admit anything at all even if such admission costs the prisoner’s life. Controlled imagination avoids all this because the victim who is being brainwashed, or even tortured, can imagine something else, and then the ordeal is perhaps not so great, certainly the victim does not succumb to it.

Do you know the process of feeling a pain? Let us stick a pin into a finger. Well, we put the point of the pin against the flesh, and we wait with acute apprehension the moment when the point of the pin will penetrate the skin, and a spurt of blood will follow. We concentrate all our energies on examining the spot. If we had a pain in our foot we would forget all about it in the process of sticking a pin in a finger. We concentrate the whole of our imagination upon that finger, upon the point of that pin. We imagine the pain it will cause to the exclusion of all else. Not so the Easterner who has been trained. He does not dwell upon the finger or the perforation to follow, he dissipates his imagination—controlled imagination—all over the body, so that the pain which is actually caused to the finger is spread out over the whole of the body, and so in such a small thing as a pin-prick it is not felt at all. That is controlled imagination. I have seen people with a bayonet stuck in them. They have not fainted, or screamed, because they knew the bayonet thrust was coming, and they imagined something else—controlled imagination again—and the pain was spread throughout the whole body area, instead of being localized, so the victim was able to survive the pain of the bayonet thrust.

Hypnotism is another good example of imagination. In this the person who is being hypnotized surrenders his imagination to the person who is hypnotizing. The person being hypnotized imagines that he is succumbing to the influence of the other. He imagines that he is becoming drowsy, that he is falling under the influence of the hypnotist. So, if the hypnotist is sufficiently persuasive, and convinces the imagination of the patient, the patient succumbs, and becomes pliable to the commands of the hypnotist, and that is all there is to it. In the same way, if a person goes in for auto-hypnosis, he merely imagines that he is falling under the influence of—HIMSELF! And so he does become controlled by his Greater Self. This imagination, of course, is the basis of faith cures; people build up, and build up, and imagine that if they visit such-and-such a place, or are treated by such-and-such a person, they will get cured on the instant. Their imagination, in such a case, really does issue commands to the body, and so a cure is effected,

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and that cure is permanent so long as the imagination retains command, so long as no doubt of the imagination creeps in.

Just one more homely little example, because this matter of controlled imagination is the most important thing that you can ever understand. Controlled imagination can mean the difference between success and failure, health and illness.

But here it is; have you ever been riding a cycle on an absolutely straight, open road, and then ahead of you seen a big stone, perhaps a few feet from your front wheel? You might have thought, "Oh, I can't avoid that!" And sure enough you could not. Your front wheel would wobble, and no matter how you tried you would quite definitely run into that stone just like a piece of iron being drawn to a magnet. No amount of will power at all would enable you to avoid that stone. Yet if you imagined that you could avoid it, then avoid it you would. No amount of will power enables you to avoid that stone. Remember that most important rule, because it can mean all the difference in the world to you. If you go on willing yourself to do a thing when the imagination opposes it, you will cause a nervous breakdown. That actually is the cause of many of these mental illnesses. Present-day conditions are quite difficult, and a person tries to subdue his imagination (instead of controlling it) by the exercise of will power. There is an inner conflict, inside the mind, and eventually a nervous breakdown occurs. The person can become neurotic, or even insane. The mental homes are absolutely filled with patients who have willed themselves to do a thing when their imagination thought otherwise. And yet, it is a very simple matter indeed to control the imagination, and to make it work for one. It is imagination—controlled imagination—which enables a man to climb a high mountain, or to fly a very fast plane and break a record, and do any of those feats which we read about. Controlled imagination. The person imagines that he can do this, or can do that, and so he can. He has the imagination telling him that he can, and he has the will "willing" him to do it. That means complete success. So, if you want to make your path an easy one and your life pleasant in the same way as the Easterner does, forget about will power, it is just a snare, and a delusion. Remember only controlled imagination. What you imagine, that you can do. Imagination, faith, are they not one?

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **The Other Side of Death**

OLD Tsong-tai was dead, curled up as if he were asleep. We were all sick at heart. The ward was hushed with sympathy. We knew death, we were facing death and suffering all day long, sometimes all night long too. But old Tsong-tai was dead.

I looked down at his lined brown face, at the skin drawn tight like parchment over a framework, like the string drawn tight on a kite as it hummed in the wind. Old Tsong-tai was a gallant old gentleman. I looked down at this thin face, his noble head, and the sparse white hairs of his beard.

Years before he had been a high-ranking official at the Palace of the Emperors in Peking. Then had come the revolution and the old man had been driven away in the terrible aftermath of war and of civil war. He had made his way to Chungking, and had set up as a market gardener, starting again from the bottom, scratching a bare existence from the hard soil. He had been an educated old man, one to whom it was a delight to talk. Now his voice was stilled forever. We had worked hard to save him.

The hard life which he'd had, proved too much for him. One day he had been working in his field, and he had dropped. For hours he had lain there, too ill to move, to ill to call for assistance. They had come for us eventually, when it was too late. We had taken the old man to the hospital and I had tended him, my friend. Now there was nothing more that I could do except see that he had burial of the type that he would want to have, and to see too that his aged wife was freed from want.

I lovingly closed his eyes, the eyes that would no longer gaze at me quizzically as I plied him with questions. I made sure that the bandage was tight around his jaws so that his mouth would not sag, the mouth that had given me so much encouragement, so much teaching in Chinese and Chinese history, for it had been my wont to call upon the old man of an evening, to take him little things, and to talk with him as one man to another. I drew the sheet over him and straightened up. The day was far advanced. It was long past the hour at which I should have left, for I had been on duty for more than seventeen hours, trying to help, trying to cure.



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I made my way up the hill, past the shops so brightly lighted, for it was dark. I went on past the last of the houses. The sky was cloudy. Below in the harbor the water had been lashing up at the quay side and the ships were rocking and tossing at their moorings.

The wind moaned and sighed through the pine trees as I walked along the road toward the lamasery. For some reason I shivered. I was oppressed with a horrid dread. I could not get the thought of death out of my mind. Why should people have to die so painfully? The clouds overhead scurried swiftly by like people intent on their business obscuring the face of the moon, blowing clear, allowing shafts of moonlight to illuminate the dark fir trees. Then the clouds would come together again and the light would be shut off, and all would be gloomy, and dark, and foreboding. I shivered.

As I walked along the road my footsteps echoed hollowly in the silence, echoed as if someone were following me close behind. I was ill at ease, again I shivered and drew my robe more tightly around me. "Must be sickening for something," I said to myself. "I really feel most peculiar. Can't think what it can be." Just then I came to the entrance of the little path through the trees, the little path which led up the hill to the lamasery. I turned right, away from the main road. For some moments I walked along until I came to a little clearing at the side of the path where a fallen tree had brought others crashing down. Now, one was flat upon the ground and the others lay at crazy angles. "I think I'll sit down for a moment. Don't know what's happened to me," I said to myself.

With that I turned into the clearing and looked for a clean place upon the trunk of a tree. I sat down and tucked my robes around my legs to protect me from the chill wind. It was eerie. All the small sounds of the night broke in upon me, queer shudders, squeaks, and rustles. Just then scurrying clouds overhead parted, and a brilliant beam of moonlight flooded into the clearing, illuminating all as if in the clearest day. It seemed strange to me, light, moonlight as bright as that, as bright as the brightest sunlight. I shivered, then jumped to my feet in alarm. A man was approaching through the trees at the other side of the clearing. I stared in utter incredulity. It was a Tibetan lama. A lama was coming toward me with blood pouring from his chest, staining his robes, his hands too were covered with blood, dripping red. He walked toward me, and I reeled back and almost tripped over the bole of a tree. I sank down and sat in terror.

"Lobsang, Lobsang, are you afraid of ME?" a well-known voice exclaimed. I stood up, rubbed my eyes, and then rushed toward that figure. "Stop!" he said. "You cannot touch me. I have come to say good-bye to you, for this day I have finished my span upon the earth, and I am about to depart. Shall we sit and talk?"

I turned, humbly, heartbroken, stunned, and resumed my seat upon the fallen tree. Overhead the clouds whirled by, the leaves of the trees rustled, a night bird flitted overhead intent only on food, upon prey, oblivious to us, and our business.

Somewhere at the end of the trunk upon which we sat some small creature of the night rustled and squeaked as it turned over rotting vegetation in search of food. Here in this desolate clearing, windswept, and bleak, I sat and talked with a ghost, the ghost of my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, who had returned from beyond Life to talk to me.

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He sat beside me as he had sat beside me so many times before away in Lhasa. He sat not touching me, perhaps three yards' distance from me. "Before you left Lhasa, Lobsang, you asked me to tell you when my span upon earth had finished. My span has now finished. Here I am."

I looked at him, the man I knew above all others. I looked at him and I could hardly believe—even with all my experience of such things—that this man was no longer of the flesh, but a spirit, that his silver cord had been severed, and the golden bowl shattered. He looked to me to be solid, entire, as I had known him. He was dressed in his robes, in his brick red cassock with the golden cloak. He looked tired as if he had traveled far and painfully. I could see well that for a long time past he had neglected his own welfare in the service of others. "How wan he looks," I thought. Then he partly turned, in a habit that I so well remembered, and as he did so I saw a dagger in his back.

He shrugged slightly and settled himself, and faced me. I froze with horror as I saw that the point of the dagger was protruding from his chest, and the blood had poured from the wound, had run down and saturated the golden robe. Before it had been as a blur to me, I had not taken in the details, I had just seen a lama with blood on his chest, blood on his hands, but now I was gazing more closely.

The hands I saw were bloodstained where he had clutched himself as the dagger came through his chest. I shivered and my blood ran cold within me. He saw my gaze, he saw the horror in my face, and he said, "I came like this deliberately, Lobsang, so that you could see what happened. Now that you have seen me thus, see me as I am."

The bloodstained form vanished in a flash, a flash of golden light, and then it was replaced by a vision of surpassing beauty and purity. It was a Being who had advance far upon the path of evolution. One who had attained Buddhahood.

Then as clear as the sound of a temple bell, his voice came to me, not perhaps to my physical ears but to my inner consciousness. A voice of beauty, resonant, full of power, full of life, Greater Life. "My time is short, Lobsang, I must soon be on my way, for there are those who await me. But you, my friend, my companion in so many adventures, I had to visit you first, to cheer you, to reassure you, and to say 'Farewell' for a time. Lobsang, we have talked so long together in the past on these matters. Again I say to you, your way will be hard, and dangerous, and long, but you will succeed in spite of all, in spite of the opposition and the jealousy of the men of the West."

For a long time we talked; talked of things too intimate to discuss. I was warm and comfortable, the clearing was filled with a golden glow, brighter than the brightest sunlight, and the warmth was the warmth of a summer noon. I was filled with true Love. Then, suddenly, my Guide, my beloved Lama Mingyar Dondup, rose to his feet, but his feet were not in contact with the earth. He stretched out his hands above my head and gave me his blessing, and he said, "I shall be watching over you, Lob-sang, to help you as much as I can, but the way is hard, the blows will be many and even before this day has ended you will receive yet another blow. Bear up, Lobsang, bear up as you have borne up in the past. My blessing be upon you."

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I raised my eyes, and before my gaze he faded and was gone, the golden light died and was no more, and the shadows of night rushed in and the wind was cold. Overhead the clouds raced by in angry turmoil. Small creatures of the night chattered and rustled. There was a squeak of terror from some victim of a larger creature as it breathed its last.

For a moment I stood as if stunned. Then I flung myself the ground beside the tree trunk, and clawed at the moss, and for a time I was not a man in spite of all my training, in spite of all I knew. Then I seemed to hear within me that dear voice once again. "Be of good cheer, my Lobsang, be of good cheer for this is not the end, for all that for which we strive is worthwhile and shall be. This is not the end." So I rose shakily to my feet, and I composed my thoughts, and I brushed off my robe, and wiped my hands from the mud on the ground.

Slowly I continued my journey up the path, up the hill, to the lamasery. "Death," I thought, "I have been to the other side of death myself, but I returned. My Guide has gone beyond recall, beyond my reach. Gone, and I am alone, alone." So, with such thoughts in my mind I reached the lamasery. At the entrance were a number of monks who had just returned by other paths. Blindly I brushed by them, and made my way along into the darkness of the temple where the sacred images gazed at me and seemed to have understanding and compassion on their carven faces. I looked upon the Tablets of the Ancestors, the red banners with the golden ideographs, upon the ever-burning incense with its fragrant swirl of smoke hanging like a somnolent cloud between the floor and the high ceiling far overhead.

I made my way to a distant corner, to a truly sacred spot, and I heard again, "Be of good cheer, Lobsang, be of good cheer, for this is not the end and that for which we strive is worthwhile and shall be. Be of good cheer." I sank down in the lotus position, and I dwelt upon the past and upon the present. How long I stayed thus I do not know. My world was toppling around me. Hardships we pressing upon me.

My beloved Guide had gone from this world, but he had told me, "This is not the end, it is all worthwhile." Around me monks went about their business dusting, preparing, lighting fresh incense, chanting, but none came to disturb my grief as I sat alone.

The night wore on. Monks made preparation for a service. The Chinese monks in their black robes with their shaven heads with the incense marks burned into their skulls, looked like ghosts in the light of the flickering butter lamps. The priest of the temple in his five-faced Buddha crown came chanting by as the temple bugles were sounded and the silver bells were rung. I slowly rose to my feet and made my reluctant way to the Abbot. With him I discussed what had happened, and asked to be excused from the midnight service, saying that I was too sick at heart, too unwilling to show my grief to the world of the lamasery.

He said, "No, my brother. You have cause to rejoice. You have passed beyond death and returned, and this day you have heard from your Guide, and you have seen the living proof of his Buddhahood. My brother you should not feel sorrow for the parting is but temporary. Take the midnight service, my brother, and rejoice that you have seen that which is denied to so many."

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“Training is all very well,” I thought. “I know as well as any that death on earth is birth into the Greater life. I know that there is no death, that this is but the World of Illusion, and that the real life is yet to come, when we leave this nightmare stage, this earth, which is but a school to which we come to learn our lessons. Death? There is no such thing. Why then am I so disheartened?”

The answer came to me almost before I asked myself the question. I am despondent because I am selfish, because I have lost that which I love, because that which I love is now beyond my reach. I am selfish indeed, for he who has gone has gone to glorious life, while I am still ensnared in the toils of the earth, left to suffer on, to strive on, to do that task for which I came in the same way as a student at a school has to strive on until he has passed his final examinations. Then with new qualifications he can set forth unto the world to learn all over again. I am selfish, I said, for I would keep my beloved Guide here upon this terrible earth for my own selfish gain.

Death? There is nothing to be afraid of in death. It is life of which we should be afraid, life which enables us to make so many mistakes.

There is no need to fear death. There is no need to fear the passing from this life to the Greater Life. There is no need to fear hell, for there is no such place, there is no such thing as a Day of Judgment. Man judges himself, and there is no sterner judge than man of his own infirmities, his own weakness, when he passes beyond life on earth and when the scales of false values drop from his eyes and when he can see Truth. So all you who fear death know this from one who has been beyond death, and has returned.

There is naught to fear. There is no Day of Judgment except that which you make yourself. There is no hell. Everyone, no matter who they are, or what they have done, is given a chance. No one is ever destroyed. No one is ever too bad to be given another chance. We fear the death of others because it deprives us of their well loved company, because we are selfish, and we fear our own death because it is a journey into the Unknown, and that which we do not understand, that which we do not know, that we fear. But—there is no death, there is only birth into a Greater Life. In the early days of all religions that was the teaching; there is no death, there is only birth into the Greater Life. Through generation after generation of priests the true teaching has been altered, corrupted, until they threaten with fear, with brimstone and sulfur, and tales of hell. They do all this to boost up their own power, to say, “We are the priests, we have the keys of heaven. Obey us or you will go to hell.”

But I have been to the other side of death and have returned, as have many lamas. We know the truth. We know that always there is hope, No matter what one has done, no matter how guilty one may feel, one must strive on for there is always hope. The Abbot of the lamasery had told me, “Take the mid night service, my brother, and tell of that which you have seen this day.” I dreaded it. It was indeed an ordeal for me; I felt sick at heart. The terrible oppression sat upon me, and I returned to a secluded corner of the temple to my meditation. So that terrible evening wore on, with the minutes feeling like hours, with the hours like days, and I thought I should never live through it. The monks came and went. There was activity around me in the body of the temple, but I was alone with

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my thoughts, thinking of the past, dreading the future.

But it was not to be. I was not to take the midnight service after all. As my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup had warned me earlier in the evening another blow was yet to fall before the day was ended, a terrible blow. I was meditating in my quiet corner, thinking of the past and of the future. At about 11 o'clock of that night when all was quiet around me, I saw a figure approaching. It was an old, old lama, one of the élite of the temple of Lhasa, an old living Buddha who had not much longer to live on this earth. He approached from the deeper shadows where the flickering butter lamps did not penetrate. He approached, and about him was a bluish glow. Around his head the glow was yellow. He approached me with his hands outstretched, palm up, and said, "My son, my son, I have grave tidings for you. The Inmost One, the 13th Dalai Lama, the last of his line, is shortly to pass from this world."

The old man, the lama who visited me, told me that the end of a cycle was approaching, and that the Dalai Lama was to leave. He told me that I should make full haste and return to Lhasa so that I could see him before it was too late. He told me that, then he said, "You must make all haste. Use whatever means you can to return. It is imperative that you leave this night."

He looked at me, and I rose to my feet. As I did so he faded, he merged back into the shadows and was no more. His spirit had returned to his body which even then was at the Jo Kang in Lhasa. Events were happening too quickly for me. Tragedy after tragedy, event after event. I felt dazed. My training had been a hard one indeed. I had been taught about life and about death, and about showing no emotion, yet what can one do when one's beloved friends are dying in quick succession? Is one to remain stony hearted, frozen faced, and aloof, or is one to have warm feelings? I loved these men.

Old Tsong-tai, my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, and the 13th Dalai Lama, now in one day within the space of a few hours I had been told one after the other was dying. Two already were dead, and the third . . . how long before he too went? A few days. I must make haste, I thought, and I turned and made my way from the inner temple into the main body of the lamasery. I went along the stone corridors towards the cell of the Abbot. As I was almost at the turning for his room I heard a sudden commotion and a thud. I hastened my footsteps.

Another lama, Jersi, also from Tibet, not from Lhasa but from Chambo, had had a telepathic message too, by a different lama. He, too, had been urged to leave Chungking and to return with me as my attendant. He was a man who had studied motor vehicles and similar forms of transit. He had been rather too quick; immediately his messenger had departed he had jumped to his feet and raced down the stone corridor towards the Abbot's cell. He had not negotiated the corner but had slipped upon some butter which had been spilled from a lamp by a careless monk. He had slipped and fallen heavily. He broke a leg and an arm, and as I turned the corner I saw him lying there, gasping, with a shaft of bone protruding.

The Abbot came out of his cell at the noise. Together we knelt beside our fallen brother. The Abbot held his shoulder while I pulled on his wrist to set the broken bone. Then I



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called for splints and bandages, and soon Jersi was splinted and bandaged—arm and a leg. The leg was rather a different matter because it was a compound fracture and we had to take him to his cell and apply traction. Then I left him in the care of another.

The Abbot and I went to his cell where I told him of the message I had received. I described to him the vision, and he, too, had had a similar impression. So it was agreed that I should leave the lamasery then, at that instant. The Abbot quickly sent for a messenger who went out at a run to get a horse, and to gallop full speed into Chungking on a mission. I stopped only to take food and to have food packed for me. I took spare blankets, and spare robe, then I made my way on foot down the path, past the clearing where earlier that evening I had had such a memorable experience, where I had seen for the last time my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. I walked on, feeling a sharp pang of emotion, fighting to control my feelings, fighting to maintain the imperturbable mien of a lama. So I came to the end of the path where it joined the road. I stood and waited.

Behind me, I thought, in the temple the deep bronze gongs would be calling the monks to service. The tinkle of silver bells will punctuate the responses and the flutes, the trumpets will be sounding. Soon upon the night air came the throb of a powerful motor, and over the distant came the bright silver beams of headlamps. A racing car tore toward me and stopped with a squeal of tires on the road. A man jumped out. "Your car, Honorable Lobsang Rampa. Shall I turn it first?"

"No," I replied. "Go down the hill toward the left." I jumped in beside the driver. The monk who had been summoned by the Abbot had rushed off to Chungking to obtain a driver and powerful car.

This was indeed a powerful vehicle, an immense black American monster. I sat beside the driver and we sped through the night on the road to Chengtu, two hundred miles from Chungking. Ahead of us great pools of light raced from headlamps, showing up the unevenness of the road, illuminating the trees by the side, and making grotesque shadows as if daring us to catch them, as if urging us on faster and faster. The driver, Ejen, was a good driver, well trained, capable and safe. Faster and faster we went with the road a mere blur. I sat back, and thought and thought.

I had in my mind the thought of my beloved Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, and the way he had trained me, all that he had done for me. He had been more to me than my own parents. I had in my mind also the thought of my beloved ruler, the 13th Dalai Lama, the last of His line, for the old prophecy said that the 13th Dalai Lama would pass, and with His passing would come a new order to Tibet. In 1950 the Chinese Communists began their invasion of Tibet, but before this the Communist Third Column had been in Lhasa. I thought of all this which I knew was going to happen, I knew this in 1933, I knew it before 1933 because it all followed exactly according to the prophecy.

So we raced on through the night two hundred miles to Chengtu. At Chengtu we got more petrol, we stretched our legs for ten minutes, and had food. Then on we went again, the wild drive through the night, through the darkness from Chengtu to Ya-an, a hundred miles further on, and there, as dawn was breaking, as the first streaks of light were shining in the sky, the road ended, the car could go no further. I went to a lamasery where by

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telepathy, the message had been received that I was on my way. A horse was ready, a high-spirited horse, one that kicked and reared, but in this emergency I had no time to pander to a horse. I got on, and stayed on, and the horse did my bidding as if it knew of the urgency of our mission. The groom released the bridle and off we shot, up the road, onwards on the way to Tibet. The car would return to Chungking, the driver having the pleasure of a soft speedy ride, while I had to sit in the high wooden saddle and ride on and on, changing horses after the end of a good run, changing always to high-spirited animals which had plenty of power because I was in a hurry.

There is no need to tell of the trials of that journey, the bitter hardships of one solitary horseman. No need to tell of the crossing of the Yangtse river, and on to the Upper Salween. I raced on and on. It was grueling work riding like this, but I made it in time. I turned through a pass in the mountains, and once again gazed upon the golden roofs of the Potala. I gazed upon the domes which hid the earthly remains of other bodies of the Dalai Lama, and I thought how soon would there be another dome concealing another body.

I rode on, and crossed again the Happy River. It was not happy for me this time. I crossed it and went along and I was in time. The hard, rushed journey had not been in vain. I was there for all the ceremonials and I took a very active part in them. There was, for me, a further unpleasant incident. A foreigner was there who wanted all consideration for himself. He thought that we were just natives, and that he was lord of all he surveyed. He wanted to be in the front of everything, noticed by all, and because I would not further his selfish aim—he tried to bribe a friend and me with wrist watches!—he has regarded me as an enemy ever since, and has indeed gone out of his way—has gone to extreme lengths—to injure me and mine. However, that has nothing to do with it, except that it shows how right were my Tutors when they warned me of jealousy.

They were very sad days indeed for us, and I do not propose to write about the ceremonial nor about the disposal of the Dalai Lama. It will suffice to say that his body was preserved according to our ancient method, and placed in a sitting position, facing the South as demanded by tradition. Time after time the head would turn toward the East.

Many consider this to be a pointer from beyond death, saying that we must look toward the East. Well, the Chinese invaders came from the East to disrupt Tibet. That turning to the East was indeed a sign, a warning. If only we could have heeded it!

I went again to the home of my parents. Old Tzu had died. Many of the people that I had known were changed. All was strange there. It was not a home to me. I was just a caller, a stranger, a high lama, a high dignitary of the temple who had returned temporarily from China. I was kept waiting to see my parents. At last I was conducted to them. Talk was forced, the atmosphere was strained. I was no longer a son of the house, but a stranger. But not quite a stranger in the sense that is usually meant, for my father conducted me to his private room, and there he took from its safe stronghold our Record, and carefully unwrapped it from its golden covering. Without a word I signed my name, the last entry. I signed my name, my rank, and my new qualifications as a qualified doctor and surgeon. Then the Book was solemnly rewrapped and replaced in its hiding place beneath the floor. Together we returned to the room in which my mother and my sister

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sat. I made my farewells and turned away. In the courtyard the grooms were holding my horse. I mounted and passed through the great gates for the last time. It was with a heavy heart that I turned into the Lingkhör Road and made my way to Menzekang, which is the main Tibetan hospital. I had worked here and now I was paying a courtesy call to the huge old monk who was in charge, Chinrobnobo. I knew him well, a nice old man.

He had taught me a lot after I had left Iron Hill Medical School. He took me into his room and asked me about Chinese medicine. I said, "They claim in China that they were the first to use acupuncture and moxibustion, but I know better. I have seen in the old records how these two remedies were brought from Tibet to be used in China years and years ago." He was most interested when I told him that the Chinese, and Western powers too, were investigating why these two remedies worked, because work they assuredly did. Acupuncture is a special method of inserting extremely fine needles into various parts of the body. They are so fine that no pain is felt. These needles are inserted and they stimulate various healing reactions. They use radium needles, and claim wonderful cures for it, but we of the East have used acupuncture for centuries with equal success. We have also used moxibustion. This is a method of preparing various herbs in a tube and igniting one end so that it glows red. This glowing end is brought near to a diseased skin and tissue, and in heating that area the virtue of the herbs passes direct to the tissues with curative effect.

These two methods have been proved again and again, but how precisely they work has not been determined. I looked again into the great storehouse in which were kept the many, many herbs, more than six thousand different types. Most of them unknown to China, unknown to the rest of the world. Tatura, for instance, which is the root of a tree, was a most powerful anaesthetic, and it could keep a person completely anaesthetized for twelve hours at a stretch, and, in the hands of a good practitioner, there would be no undesirable after effects whatever. I looked around, and I could find nothing with which to find fault in spite of all the modern advances of China and America. The old Tibetan cures still were satisfactory.

That night I slept in my old place, and as in the days when I was a pupil I attended the services. It all carried me back. What memories there were in every one of those stones! In the morning when it was light I climbed to the highest part of Iron Mountain, and gazed out over the Potala, over the Serpent Park, over Lhasa, and into the snow-clad mountains surrounding. I gazed long and then I went back into the Medical School and said my farewells and took my bag of tsampa. Then with my blanket rolled and my spare robe in front of me I remounted my horse and made my way down the hill.

The sun hid behind a black cloud as I reached the bottom of the path and passed by the village of Shë. Pilgrims were everywhere, pilgrims from all parts of Tibet, and from beyond, come to pay their respects at the Potala. Horoscope vendors were there crying their wares, and those who had magic potions and charms were doing a brisk trade. The recent ceremonials had brought merchants, traders, hawkers and beggars of all description to the Sacred Road. Nearby a yak train was coming in through the Western Gate, laden with goods for the markets of Lhasa. I stopped to watch, thinking that I might never again see this so familiar sight, and feeling sick at heart at the thought of leaving.

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There was a rustle behind me. "Your blessing, Honorable Medical Lama," said a voice, and I turned to see one of the Body Breakers, one of the men who had done so much to help me when, by order of the 13th Dalai Lama, he whose body I had just seen, I had studied with. When I had been able to get past the age-old tradition that bodies might not be dissected, I, because of my special task, had been given every facility to dissect bodies, and here was one of those men who had done so much to help me. I gave him my blessing, glad indeed that someone from the past recognized me.

"Your teaching was wonderful," I said. "You taught me more than the Medical School of Chungking."

He looked pleased, and put out his tongue to me in the manner of the serf. He backed away from me in the traditional manner, and mingled with the throng at the Gate.

For a few moments more I stood beside my horse, looking at the Potala, at the Iron Mountain, and then I went on my way, crossing the Kyi River, and passing many pleasant parks. The ground here was flat and green with the green of well-watered grass, a paradise twelve thousand eight hundred feet above sea level, ringed by mountains rising yet another six thousand feet, liberally speckled with lamaseries both large and small, and with isolated hermitages perched precariously on inaccessible rock spurs.

Gradually the slope of the road increased, climbing to meet the mountain passes. My horse was fresh, well cared for and well fed. He wanted to hurry, I wanted to linger. Monks and merchants rode by, some of them looking at me curiously because I had departed from tradition and I was riding alone for greater speed. My father would never have ridden without an immense retinue as befitted his station, but I was of the modern age. So strangers looked at me curiously, but others whom I had known called a friendly greeting. At last my horse and I breasted the rise, and we came level with the great chorten of stones which was the last place from which Lhasa could be seen. I dismounted and tethered my horse, then sat on a convenient rock as I looked long into the valley.

The sky was a deep blue, the deep blue that is only seen at such altitudes. Snow-white clouds drifted lazily overhead. A raven flopped down beside me and pecked inquiringly at my robe. As an afterthought I added a stone as custom demanded to the huge pile beside me, the pile which had been built up by the work of centuries of pilgrims, for this was the spot from whence pilgrims obtained their first and last view of the Holy City.

Before me was the Potala, with its walls sloping inwards from the base. The windows, too, sloped from the bottom to the top, adding to the effect. It looked like a building carved by Gods from the living rock. My Chakpori stood even higher than the Potala, without dominating it. Further I saw the golden roofs of the Jo Kang, the thirteen-hundredyear-old temple, surrounded by the administrative buildings. I saw the main road straight through, the willow grove, the swamps, the Snake Temple, and the beautiful patch which was the Norbu Linga, and the Lama's Gardens along by the Kyi Chu. But the golden roofs of the Potala were ablaze with light, catching the brilliant sunlight, and throwing it back with gold red rays, with every colour of the spectrum. Here, beneath these cupolas rested the remains of the Bodies of the Dalai Lama. The monument con-

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taining the remains of the 13th was the highest of the lot, some seventy feet—three stories high—and covered with a ton of purest gold. And inside that shrine were precious ornaments, jewels, gold and silver, a fortune rested there beside the empty shell of its previous owner. And now Tibet was without a Dalai Lama, the last one had left, and the one yet to come, according to prophecy, would be one who would serve alien masters, one who would be in thrall of the Communists.

To the sides of the valley clung the immense lamaseries of Drepung, Sera, and Ganden. Half hidden in a clump of trees gleamed the white and gold of Nechung, the Oracle of Lhasa, the Oracle of Tibet. Drepung indeed looked like a rice heap, a white pile sprawled down the mountain side.

Sera, known as the Wild Rose Fence, and Ganden the Joyous; I looked upon them and thought of the times I had spent within their walls, within their walled township. I looked, too, at the vast number of smaller lamaseries, perched everywhere, up the mountain sides, in groves of trees; and I looked too at the hermitages dotted in places most difficult of access, and my thoughts went out to the men within, immured, perhaps, for life in darkness with no light at all, with food but once a day, in darkness, never to come out again in the physical, but by their special training able to move in the astral, able to see the sights of the world as a disembodied spirit. My gaze wandered; the Happy River meandered along through cuts and marshlands, hiding behind the skirts of trees, and reappearing in the open stretches. I looked and I saw the house of my parents, the large estate which had never been home to me. I saw pilgrims thronging the roads, making their circuits. Then from some distant lamasery I heard on the mild breeze the sound of the temple gongs, and the scream of the trumpets, and felt a lump rising in my throat and a stinging sensation in the bridge of my nose. It was too much for me. I turned and remounted my horse, and rode on, into the unknown.

I went on with the country becoming wilder, and wilder. I passed from pleasant parklands and sandy soil, and small homesteads, to rocky eminences, and wild gorges through which water rushed continuously filling the air with sound, drenching me to the skin with the spray. I rode on, staying the nights as before at lamaseries. This time I was a doubly welcome guest for I was able to give first hand information about the recent sad ceremonials at Lhasa, for I was one of the end of an era, a sad time would come upon our land.

I was provided with ample food and flesh horses, and after days of travel I again arrived at Ya-an, where, to my joy, the big car was waiting with Jersi, the driver. Reports had filtered through that I was on my way, and the old Abbot at Chungking had thoughtfully sent it for me. I was glad indeed because I was saddlesore, and travel-stained, and weary. It was a pleasure indeed to see that gleaming great vehicle, the product of another science, a product which would bear me along swiftly, doing in hours what I would normally take days to accomplish. So I got in the car, thankful that the Abbot of the lamasery in Chungking was my friend and had so much thought for my comfort and my pleasure after the long arduous journey from my home in Lhasa. Soon we were speeding along the road to Changtu.



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There we stayed the night. There was no point in hurrying and getting back to Chungking in the small hours, so we stayed the night, and in the morning we looked around the place and did some local shopping. Then off we went again along the road to Chungking.

The red-faced boy was still at his plough, clad only in blue shorts. The plough drawn by the ungainly water buffalo. They wallowed through the mud trying to turn it over so that rice could be planted. We sped on faster, the birds overhead calling to one another, and making sudden swoops and darts as if for the sheer joy of living. Soon we were approaching the outskirts of Chungking. We were approaching along the road lined with the silver eucalyptus trees, with the limes, and the green pine trees. Soon we came to a little road at which I alighted and made my way on foot up the path to the lamasery. As I once again passed that clearing with the fallen tree and the trees lying at crazy angles I thought how memorable the events since I sat upon the bole and talked with my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. I stopped awhile in meditation, then I picked up my parcels once again and made my way on into the lamasery.

In the morning I went to Chungking and the heat was like a living thing, sweltering, stifling. Even the rickshaw-pullers and the passengers who rode with them were looking wilted and jaded in the intolerable heat. I, from the fresh air in Tibet, felt more than half dead, but I as a lama had to keep erect as an example to others. In the Street of the Seven Stars I came across friend Huang busy shopping, and I greeted him as the friend he was.

“Huang,” I said, “what are all these people doing here?”

“Why, Lobsang,” he answered, “people are coming from Shanghai. The trouble there with the Japanese is causing traders to shut up their shops and to come here to Chungking. I understand that some of the Universities are seriously thinking of it as well, and by the way,” he went on, “I have a message for you. General (now Marshal) Feng Yuhsiang wants to see you. He asked me to give you the message. Go and see him as soon as you return.”

“All right,” I said, “how about you coming up with me?” He said that he would. We did our leisurely shopping, it was far too hot to hurry, and then we went back to the lamasery. An hour or two later we made our way up to the temple near where the General had his home, and there I saw him. He told me much about the Japanese, and the trouble they were making in Shanghai.

He told me how the International Settlement there had recruited a police force of thugs and crooks who were not really trying to restore order. He said, “War is coming, Rampa, war is coming. We need all the doctors we can and doctors who are also pilots. We must have them.” He offered me a commission in the Chinese army, and gave me to understand that I could fly as much as I should like.

The General was an immense man, well over six feet tall, with broad shoulders and a huge head. He had been in many campaigns, and now he had thought, until the Japanese difficulty, that his days as a soldier were over.

He was a poet, too, and he lived near the Temple for Viewing the Moon. I liked him,

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he was a man with whom I could get on, a clever man. Apparently, so he told me, one incident in particular had been sponsored by the Japanese to give them a pretext for invading China. Some Japanese monk had been killed by accident, and the Japanese authorities demanded that the mayor of Shanghai should prohibit the boycott of Japanese goods, disband the Association for National Deliverance, arrest the leaders of the boycott, and guarantee compensation for the killing of that monk. The Mayor, to preserve the peace and thinking of the overwhelming force of the Japanese, accepted the ultimatum on the 28th January, 1932. But at 10:30 that night, after the Mayor had actually accepted the ultimatum, the Japanese marines began occupying a number of streets in the International Settlement, and so paving the way for the next world war. This was all news to me. I knew nothing at all about it because I had been travelling elsewhere.

As we were talking a monk came, dressed in a grey-black gown, to tell us that the Supreme Abbot T'ai Shu was here, and we had to see him as well. I had to tell him about events in Tibet, about the last ceremonies of my beloved 13th Dalai Lama. He in turn told me of the grave fears which he and others had for the safety of China. "Not that we fear the final outcome," he said, "but the destruction, the death, and the suffering which will come first."

So they pressed me again to accept a commission in the Chinese forces, to place my training at their disposal. And then came the blow. "You must go to Shanghai," said the General. "Your services are very much needed there, and I suggest that your friend, Po Ku, goes with you. I have made preparations already, it is but for you, and he, to accept."

"Shanghai?" I said. "That's a terrible place to be in. I really do not think much of it. However, I know that I must go, and so I will accept."

We talked on and on, and the evening shadows gradually crept in upon us, and the day turned to dusk, so that eventually we had to part. I rose to my feet, and made my way out into the courtyard, where the solitary palm was looking faded, and wilted in the heat, with its leaves hanging down, and turning brown. Huang was sitting patiently waiting for me, sitting immobile, wondering why the interview was so long. He, too, rose to his feet. Silently we made our way down the path, past the rushing gorge, and over the little stone bridge, down toward our own lamasery.

There was a large rock before the entrance to our path and we climbed upon it, where we could look out over the rivers. There was much activity nowadays. Little steamers were chugging along. Flames of smoke rising from their funnels being caught by the wind, were being blown off into a black banner. Yes, there were more steamers now than ever before I left for Tibet. Refugees were coming in more every day, more traffic, people who could see into the future, and see what the invasion of China would really mean. There was more congestion in a city already congested.

As we looked up into the night sky we could see the great storm clouds piling up, and we knew that later in the night there would be a thunderstorm rolling down from the mountains, swamping the place with torrential rain and deafening us with the echo and rumbles. Was this, we thought, a symbol of the troubles to come upon China? It certainly seemed so, the air was tense, electric. I think we both sighed in unison to think of the

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future of this land of which we were both so fond. But the night was upon us. The first heavy drops of the rainstorm were coming down and wetting us. We turned together, and made our way into the temple to where the Abbot was waiting for us, agog to be told all that had happened. I was glad indeed to see him, and to discuss matters, and to receive his praise for the course which I had agreed to undertake.

Far into the night we talked, and talked, deafened at times by the roaring thunder, and by the rushing of the rain upon the temple roof. Eventually we made our way to our beds upon the floor, and went to sleep. With the coming of the morning, after the first service, we made our preparations to set off again on the start of yet another phase of life, an even more unpleasant stage.

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## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Clairvoyance**

SHANGHAI! I had no illusions. I knew that Shanghai was going to be a very difficult spot indeed in which to live. But fate had decreed that I should go there, and so we made our preparations, Po Ku and I, and later in the morning we walked together down the street of steps, down to the docks, and went aboard a ship which would take us far down the river to Shanghai.

In our cabin—we shared a cabin—I lay upon my bunk, and thought of the past. I thought of the first time that I had known anything about Shanghai. It was when my guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, was teaching me the finer points of clairvoyance, and as this particular knowledge may be of interest and help to many I will give the actual experience here.

It was a few years previously, when I was a student in one of the great lamaseries of Lhasa. I and others of my class were sitting in the schoolroom longing to be out. The class was worse than usual for the teacher was a great bore, of our worst. The whole class was finding it difficult to follow his words and remain alert. It was one of those days when the sun was shining warmly, when light fleecy clouds raced high overhead. Everything called us to go outside into the warmth and sunshine, away from musty classrooms and the droning voice of an uninteresting teacher.

Suddenly there was commotion. Someone had come into the room. We, with our backs to the teacher, could not see who it was, and we dared not turn and look in case he was looking at us! The rustle of paper, “Hmm ruining my class.” A sharp “crack” as the teacher brought his cane down on his desk, making all of us jump high with fright. “Lobsang Rampa, come here.” Filled with foreboding I rose to my feet, turned and made my three bows. What had I done now? Had the Abbot seen me dropping pebbles on those visiting lamas? Had I been observed “sampling” those pickled walnuts? Had I—but the voice of the teacher soon put my mind at rest: “Lobsang Rampa, the Honourable Senior Lama, your Guide, Mingyar Dondup, requires you at once. Go, and pay more attention to him than you have to me!” I went, in a hurry.

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Along the corridors, up the stairs, round to the right, and into the precincts of the lamas. "Tread softly here," I thought, "some crusty old dodderers along here. Seventh door left, that is it."

Just as I raised my hand to knock; the voice said "Come in," and in I went. "Your clairvoyance never fails when there is food about. I have tea and pickled walnuts. You are just in time." The Lama Mingyar Dondup had not expected me so early, but now he certainly made me welcome. As we ate he talked. "I want you to study crystal gazing, using the various types of appliances. You must be familiar with them all."

After our tea he led me down to the storeroom. Here were kept the appliances of all kinds, planchettes, tarot cards, black mirrors, and a perfectly amazing range of devices. We wandered around, he pointing out various objects and explaining their use. Then, turning to me, he said, "Pick a crystal which you feel will be harmonious to you. Look at them all, and make your choice."

I had my eyes on a very beautiful sphere, genuine rock crystal without a flaw and of such a size that it needed two hands to hold it. I picked it up and said, "This is the one I want."

My Guide laughed. "You have chosen the oldest and most valuable. If you can use it you can have it." This particular crystal, which I still have, had been found in one of the tunnels far below the Po-tala. In those unenlightened days it had been called "The Magic Ball" and given to the Medical Lamas of the Iron Mountain as it was considered to be connected with medicine.

A little later in this chapter I will deal with glass spheres, black mirrors, and water globes; but now it may be of interest to describe how we prepared to use the crystal, how we trained ourselves to become as one with it.

It is obvious that if one is healthy, physically and mentally fit, the sight is at its best. So it is with the Third Eye sight. One must be fit, and to that end we prepared before trying to use any of these devices. I had picked up my crystal, and now I looked at it. Held between my two hands it appeared to be a heavy globe which reflected upside-down a picture of the window, with a bird perched on the ledge outside. Looking more closely I could dimly see the reflection of the Lama Mingyar Dondup, and—yes—my own reflection as well. "You are looking at it, Lobsang, and that is not the way in which it is used. Cover it up and wait until you are shown."

The next morning I had to take herbs with my first meal, herbs to purify the blood and clear the head, herbs to tone up the constitution generally. Morning and night these had to be taken, for two weeks. Each afternoon I had to rest for an hour and a half with my eyes and the upper part of my head covered with a thick black cloth. During this time I had to practice special breathing to a particular rhythm pattern. I had to pay scrupulous attention to personal cleanliness during this time.

With the two weeks completed I went again to the Lama Mingyar Dondup. "Let us go to that quiet little room on the roof," he said. "Until you are more familiar with it you will need absolute quietness."



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We climbed the stairs and emerged on the flat roof. To one side was a little house where the Dalai Lama had his audiences when he came to Chakpori for the Annual Blessing of the Monks. Now we were going to use it. I was going to, and that was indeed an honour, for no other than the Abbot and the Lama Mingyar Dondup could use it. Inside we sat on our cushion- seats on the floor. Behind us was a window through which one could see the distant mountains standing as the Guardians of our pleasant valley. The Potala too could be seen from here, but that was too familiar to bother about. I wanted to see what there was in the crystal.

“Move around this way, Lobsang. Look at the crystal and tell me when all the reflections disappear. We must exclude all odd points of light. They are not what we want to see.” That is one of the main points to remember. Exclude all light which causes reflections. Reflections merely distract the attention. Our system was to sit with the back to a north window, and draw a reasonably thick curtain across the window so as to provide a twilight. Now, with the curtains drawn, the crystal ball in my hands appeared dead, inert. No reflections at all marred its surface.

My Guide sat beside me. “Wipe the crystal with this damp cloth, dry it, then pick it up with this black cloth. Do not touch it with your hands yet.” I did as instructed, carefully wiped the sphere, dried it, and picked it up with the black cloth which was folded into a square. My two hands I crossed, palms up, under the crystal which was thus supported in the palm of the left hand. “Now, look in the sphere. Not at it, but in. Look at the very centre and then let your vision become blank. Do not try to see anything, just let your mind go blank.” The latter was not difficult for me. Some of my teachers thought that my mind was blank all the time.

I looked at the crystal. My thoughts wandered. Suddenly the sphere in my hands seemed to grow, and I felt as if I was about to fall inside it. It made me jump, and the impression faded. Once more I held just a ball of crystal in my hands. “Lobsang! WHY did you forget all I told you? You were on the verge of seeing and your start of surprise broke the thread. You will see nothing today.”

One has to look in the crystal and just hold one’s mental focus on some inner part of it. Then there comes a peculiar sensation as if one is about to step inside another world. Any start or fright or surprise at this stage will spoil everything. The only thing to do then, while learning, of course, is to put aside the crystal and not attempt to “see” until one has had a night’s sleep.

The next day we tried again. I sat, as before, with my back to the window, and saw to it that all disturbing facets of light were excluded. Normally I should have sat in the lotus attitude of meditation, but because of a leg injury this would not be the most comfortable for me. Comfort is essential. One must sit quite at ease. It is better to sit in an unorthodox manner and SEE, than to sit in one of the formal attitudes and see nothing. Our rule was, sit any way you like so long as it is comfortable, as discomfort will distract the attention.

Into the crystal I gazed. By my side the Lama Mingyar Dondup sat motionless, erect, as if carved from stone. What would I see? That was my thought. Would it be the same as when I first saw an aura? The crystal looked dull, inert.

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"I'll never see in this thing," I thought. It was evening so that there would be no strong play of sunlight to cause shifting shadows, so that the clouds would not temporarily obscure the light, and then permit it to shine brightly. No shadows, no points of light. It was twilight in the room and with the black cloth between my hands and the sphere I could see no reflections at all on its surface. But I was supposed to be looking inside.

Suddenly the crystal seemed to come alive. Inside a fleck of white appeared at the centre and spread like white swirling smoke. It was as if a tornado raged inside, a silent tornado. The smoke thickened and thinned, thickened and thinned, and then spread in an even film over the globe. It was like a curtain designed to prevent me from seeing. I probed mentally, trying to force my mind past the barrier. The globe seemed to swell, and I had a horrid impression of falling head first into a bottomless void. Just then a trumpet blared and the white curtain shivered into a snowstorm which melted as if in the heat of the noonday sun.

"You were near it then, Lobsang, very near."

"Yes I would have seen something if that trumpet had not been sounded. It put me off."

"Trumpet? Oh, you were as far as that, eh? That was your subconscious trying to warn you that clairvoyance and crystal gazing are for the very few. Tomorrow we will go further."

On the third evening my Guide and I sat together as before. Once again he reminded me of the rules. This third evening was more successful. I sat with the sphere lightly held and concentrated on some invisible point in its dim interior. The swirling smoke appeared almost at once and soon provided a curtain. I probed with my mind, thinking; "I am going through, I am going through NOW!" Again came the horrid impression of falling. This time I was prepared. Down from some immense height I plummeted, falling straight towards the smoke-covered world which was growing with amazing rapidity. Only strict training prevented me from screaming as I approached the white surface at tremendous speed—and passed through, unharmed.

Inside the sun was shining. I looked about me in very real astonishment. I had died surely for this was nowhere that I knew. What a strange place! Water, dark water stretched before me as far as I could see. More water than I had ever imagined existed. Some distance away a huge monster like a fearsome fish forced its way across the surface of the water. In the middle a black pipe sent what looked like smoke upwards, to be blown back by the wind. To my amazement I saw what appeared to be little people walking about on the "fish's back!" This was too much for me. I turned to flee and stopped in my tracks petrified.

This was too much. Great stone houses many stories high were before me. Just in front of me a Chinaman dashed pulling a device on two wheels. Apparently he was a carrier of some sort, because on the wheeled thing a woman was perched. "She must be a cripple," I thought, "and has to be carried about on wheels." Towards me a man was walking, a Tibetan lama. I held my breath, it was exactly like the Lama Mingyar Dondup

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when he was many years younger. He walked straight up to me, through me, and I jumped with fright.

“Oh!” I wailed, “I’m blind.” It was dark, I could not see.

“It is all right, Lobsang, you are doing well. Let me draw back the curtains.” My Guide did so, and into the room flooded the pale light of evening. “You certainly have very great clairvoyance powers, Lobsang; they merely need directing. Quite inadvertently I touched the crystal and from your remarks I gather that you have seen the impression of when I went to Shanghai many years ago and nearly collapsed at my first sight of steamer and rickshaw. You are doing well.”

I was still in a daze, still living in the past. What strange and terrible things there were outside of Tibet. Tame fishes which belched smoke and upon which one rode, men who carried wheeled women, I was afraid to think of it, afraid to dwell on the fact that I too would have to go to that strange world later.

“Now you must immerse the crystal in water to erase the impression you have just seen. Dip it right in, allow it to rest on a cloth on the bottom of the bowl, and then lift it out with another cloth. Do not let your hands touch it yet.”

That is an important point to remember when using a crystal. One should always demagnetize it after each reading. The crystal becomes magnetized by the person holding it in much the same way as a piece of iron will become magnetized if brought into contact with a magnet. With the iron it is usually sufficient to knock it to cause it to lose its magnetism, but a crystal should be immersed in water.

Unless one does demagnetize after each reading the results become more and more confusing. The “auric emanations” of succeeding people begin to build up and one gives a completely inaccurate reading.

No crystal should ever be handled by anyone except the owner, other than for the purpose of “magnetizing” for a reading. The more the sphere is handled by other people, the less responsive it becomes. We were taught that when we had given a number of readings in a day we should take the crystal to bed with us so that we should personally magnetize it by its being close to us. The same result would be attained by carrying the crystal around with us, but we would look rather foolish ambling around twiddling the crystal ball!

When not in use, the crystal should lie covered by a black cloth. One should NEVER allow strong sunlight to fall on it, as that impairs its use for esoteric purposes. Nor should one ever allow a crystal to be handled by a mere thrill seeker. There is a purpose behind this. A thrill-seeker not being genuinely interested but wanting cheap entertainment, harms the aura of the crystal. It is much the same as handing an expensive camera or watch to a child so that its idle curiosity may be appeased.

Most people could use a crystal if they would take the trouble to find what type suited them. We make sure that our spectacles suit us. Crystals are equally important. Some persons can see better with a rock crystal, and some with glass. Rock crystal is the most

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powerful type. Here is a brief history of mine as recorded at Chakpori.

Millions of years ago volcanoes belched out flame and lava. Deep in the earth various types of sand were churned together by earthquakes, and fused into a kind of glass by the volcanic heat. The glass was broken into pieces by the earthquakes and spewed out over the mountain-sides. Lava, solidified, covered much of it.

In the course of time rock falls exposed some of this natural glass, or “rock crystal.” One piece was seen by tribal priests in the dawn of human life. In those far off days the priests were men who had occult power, who could predict, and tell the history of an object by psychometry.

Such a one must have touched one particular fragment of crystal and been impressed enough to take it home. There must have been a clear spot from which he gained clairvoyant impressions. Laboriously he and others chipped the fragment into a sphere, as that was the most convenient to hold. From generation to generation, for centuries, it was passed from priest to priest, each charged with the task of polishing the hard material. Slowly the sphere became rounder and clearer. For an age it was worshipped as the Eye of a God. In the Age of Enlightenment it came into its own as an instrument whereby the Cosmic Consciousness could be tapped. Now, almost four inches across and as clear as water, it was carefully packed and hidden in a stone casket in a tunnel far beneath the Potala.

Centuries later it was discovered by monk explorers and the inscription on the casket was deciphered. “This is the Window of the Future,” it read, “the crystal in which those who are fitted can see the past and know the future. It was in the custody of the High Priest of the Temple of Medicine.” As such, the crystal was taken to Chakpori, the present Temple of Medicine, and kept for a person who could use it. I was that person, for me it lives.

Rock crystal of such size is rare, doubly rare when it is without flaw. Not everyone can use such a crystal. It may be too strong and tend to dominate one. Glass spheres can be obtained, and those are useful for gaining the necessary preliminary experience. A good size is from three to four inches; size is NOT important at all. Some monks have a tiny sliver of crystal set in a large finger-ring. The important point is to be sure that there are no flaws, or that there is only a slight defect that is not at all visible in subdued lighting. Small crystals, of “rock” or glass have the advantage of light weight, and that is considerable when one tends to hold the sphere.

A person who desires to purchase a crystal of any type should advertise in one of the “psychic” papers. The things offered for sale at certain shops are more suitable for conjurors or stage turns. Usually there are blemishes which do not show until one has bought the thing and taken it home! Have any crystal sent on approval, and as soon as you unpack it wash it in running water. Carefully dry it, and then examine it, holding it with a dark cloth. The reason? Wash it to remove any fingermarks which may appear to be faults, and hold it so that your fingerprints do not mislead you.

You cannot expect to sit down, look in the crystal, and “see pictures.” Nor is it fair to

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blame the crystal for your failure. It is merely an instrument, and you would not blame a telescope if you looked through the wrong end and saw only a small picture.

Some people cannot use a crystal. Before giving up they should try a "black mirror." This can be made very cheaply indeed by procuring a large lamp glass from a motor accessory shop. The glass must be concave and quite smooth and plain. The ridged type of car headlamp glass is not suitable. With a suitable glass hold the outer curved surface over a candle flame. Move it about so that there is an even deposit of soot on the OUTER surface of the glass. This can be "fixed" with some cellulose lacquer such as is used to prevent brass from tarnishing.

With the black mirror ready, proceed as you would with the round crystal. Suggestions applicable to any type of crystal are given later in this chapter. With the black mirror one looks at the INNER surface, being careful to exclude all random reflections.

Another type of black mirror is the one known to us as "null." It is the same as the former mirror, but the soot is on the INSIDE of the curve. A big disadvantage is that one cannot "fix" the soot, as to do so would be to provide a glossy surface. This mirror may be of more use to those who are distracted by reflections.

Some people use a bowl of water and gaze into it. The bowl must be clear, and entirely without pattern. Place a dark cloth under it, and it becomes in effect a glass crystal. In Tibet there is a lake so situated that one sees, yet almost doesn't see the water in it. It is a famous lake and is used by the State Oracles in some of their most important predictions. This lake, we call it Chö-kor Gyal-ki Namtso (in English, The Heavenly Lake of the Victorious Wheel of Religion) is at a place called Tak-po, some hundred miles from Lhasa. The district around is mountainous and the lake is enclosed by high peaks. The water is normally very blue indeed, but at times as one looks from certain vantage points the blue changes to a swirling white, as if whitewash had been dropped in. The water swirls and foams, then suddenly a black hole appears in the middle of the lake, while above it dense white clouds form. In the space between the black hole and the white clouds a picture of the future events can be seen.

To this spot, at least once in his lifetime, comes the Dalai Lama. He stays at a nearby pavilion and looks at the lake. He sees events important to him and, not least important, the date and manner of his passing from this life. Never has the lake been proved wrong!

We cannot all go to that lake, but most of us with a little patience and faith can use a crystal. For Western readers here is a suggested method. The word "crystal" will cover rock crystal, glass, black mirrors, and the water globe.

For a week pay particular attention to the health. For this week in particular avoid (as much as possible in this troubled world) worries and anger. Eat sparingly and take no sauces or fried foods. Handle the crystal as much as possible without making any attempt to "see." This will transfer some of your personal magnetism to it, and enable you to become quite familiar with the feel of it. Remember to cover the crystal at all times when you are not handling it. If you can, keep it in a box which can be locked. This will prevent other people from playing with it in your absence. Direct sunlight, as you know,



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should be avoided.

After the seven days take the crystal to a quiet room with a north light if possible. The evening is the best time, as then there is no direct sunlight to wax and wane with the passing of clouds.

Sit—in any attitude you find comfortable—with your back to the light. Take the crystal into your hands and note any reflections on its surface. These must be eliminated by drawing the curtains across the window, or by changing your position.

When you are satisfied hold the crystal in contact with the centre of your forehead for a few seconds, and then slowly withdraw it. Now hold it in your cupped hands, the back of which can rest on your lap. Gaze idly at the surface of the crystal, then move your vision inwards to the centre to what you must imagine as a zone of nothingness. Just let your mind go blank. Avoid trying to see anything. Avoid any strong emotion.

Ten minutes is enough for the first night. Gradually increase the time, until at the end of the week you can do it for half an hour. The next week let your mind go blank as soon as you can. Just gaze into nothingness inside the crystal. You should find that its outlines waver. It may appear that the whole sphere is growing, or you may feel that you are falling forward. That is how it should be. Do NOT start with astonishment, for if you do it will prevent you from "seeing" for the rest of the evening. The average person "seeing" for the first time jerks in much the same way as we sometimes jerk when we are falling off to sleep.

With a little more practice you will find that the crystal is apparently growing larger and larger. One evening you will find as you look in that it is luminous and filled with white smoke. This will clear provided you do not jerk—and you will have your first view of the (usually) past.

It will be something connected with you, for only you have handled the sphere. Keep on at it, seeing just your own affairs. When you can "see" at will, direct it to show what you want to know. The best method is to say to yourself firmly, and out loud. "I am going to see so-and-so tonight." If you believe it, you WILL see what you desire. It is as simple as that.

To know the future you must marshal your facts. Gather all the data you have available, and say them to yourself. Then "ask" the crystal, and tell yourself that you are going to see what you want to know.

A warning here. One cannot use the crystal for personal gain, to forecast the result of races, nor to injure another person. There is a powerful occult law which will make it all recoil on your own head if you try to exploit the crystal. That law is as inexorable as time itself.

By now you should have been able to obtain much practice in your own affairs. Would you like to try on someone else? Dip the crystal in water and carefully dry it without touching the surface. Then hand it to the other person.

Say, "Take it in your two hands and THINK what you want to know. Then pass it back to

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me.” Naturally you will have warned your enquirer not to speak or disturb you. It is advisable to try with some well-known friend first as strangers often prove disconcerting when one is learning.

When your enquirer passes back the crystal you will take it in your hands, either bare or covered in the black cloth, it does not matter which; you should have “personalized” the crystal by now. Settle yourself comfortably, raise the crystal to your forehead for a second, then let your hands rest on your lap, supporting the crystal in any way which causes no strain. Look INTO it and let your mind become blank, quite blank if you can, but this first attempt may be somewhat difficult if you are self-conscious.

As you compose yourself, if you have trained yourself as suggested, you will observe one of three things. They are true pictures, symbols, and impressions. True pictures should be your aim. Here the crystal clouds, and then the clouds disperse to show actual pictures, living pictures of what you want to know. There is no difficulty in interpreting such a case.

Some people do not see true pictures; they see symbols. They may see, as an example, a row of X’s, or a hand. It may be a windmill, or a dagger. Whatever it is you will soon learn to interpret them correctly.

The third thing is impressions. Here nothing is set except swirling clouds and a little luminescence, but as the crystal is held, definite impressions are felt or heard. It is essential to avoid personal bias, essential not to overrule the crystal by one’s own personal feelings about a certain case.

The true Seer never tells a person of the date or even the probability of death. You will know, but you should NEVER tell. Nor will you warn a person of impending illness. Say instead: “It is advisable to take a little more care than usual on such-and-such a date.” And never tell a person: “Yes, your husband is out with a girl who—etc., etc.” If you are using the crystal correctly you will KNOW that he IS out, but is he out on business? Is she relation? Never, NEVER tell anything that would tend to break up a home or cause unhappiness. This is abuse of the crystal. Use it only for good, and in return good will come to you. If you see nothing, say so, and the enquirer will respect you. You can “invent” what you say you see, and perhaps you say something which the enquirer KNOWS to be incorrect. Then your prestige and reputation are gone, and you also bring a bad name to occult science.

Having given your reading to the enquirer, carefully wrap up the crystal and set it down gently. When the enquirer has left you are advised to dip the crystal in water, wipe it dry, and then handle it to re-personalize it with your own magnetism. The more you handle the crystal the better it will be. Avoid scratching it, and when you have finished, put it away in the black cloth. If you can, put it in a box and lock it. Cats are great offenders, some of them will sit for a very long time “gazing.” And when you use the crystal next time, you do not want to see the cat’s life history and ambitions. It CAN be done. In Tibet in some of the “occult” lamaseries a cat is questioned by the crystal when it comes off duty after guarding gems. Then the monks know if there has been any attempt at stealing.

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It is strongly advised that before embarking on any form of training in crystal gazing, you inquire most thoroughly into your secret motives. Occultism is a two-edged weapon, and those who “play” out of idle curiosity are sometimes punished by mental or nervous disorders. You can know through it the pleasure of helping others, but you can also know much that is horrible and unforgettable. It is safer just to read this chapter unless you are very, very sure of your motives.

Once having decided on the crystal, do not change it. Make a definite habit to touch it every day, or every other day. The Saracens of old would never show a sword, even to a friend, unless to draw blood. If for some reason they HAD to show the weapon, then they pricked a finger to “draw blood.” So with the crystal, if you show it at all to anyone, READ it even though it be only your own affair. Read it, although you need not tell anyone what you are doing or what you see. This is not superstition, but a sure way of training yourself so that when the crystal is uncovered you “see” automatically, without preparation, without thinking about it.

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## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **Mercy Flight**

GENTLY the boat slid to a halt in Soochow Creek. Chinese coolies swarmed aboard, yelling madly and gesticulating. Quickly our goods were removed, and we got in a rickshaw and were conveyed swiftly along the Bund to the Chinese city to a temple at which I was to stay for the time being. Po Ku and I were silent in a world of babel. Shanghai was a very noisy place indeed, and a busy one too. Busier than normal because the Japanese were trying to make grounds for a fierce attack, and for some time past they had been searching foreign residents who wanted to cross the Marco Polo Bridge. They were causing extreme embarrassment by the thoroughness of their search. Western people could not understand that the Japanese or the Chinese either, could see no shame in the human body, but only in people's thoughts about the human body, and when Westerners were being searched by the Japanese they thought it was meant as a deliberate insult, which it was not.

For a time I had a private practice in Shanghai, but to the Easterner "time" is of no account. We do not say such and-such a year, for all times flow into one. I had a private practice, doing medical and psychological work. There were patients to see in my office, and in the hospitals. Of leisure there was none. Any time free from medical work was taken up by intensive studies of navigation; and the theory of flight. Long hours after nightfall I flew above the twinkling lights of the city, and out over the countryside with only the faintest glimmers from peasants' cottages to guide me.

The years rolled on unheeded, I was much too busy to bother about dates. The Shanghai Municipal Council knew me well and made full use of my professional services. I had a good friend in a White Russian. Bogomoloff was one who had escaped from Moscow during the revolution. He had lost all in that tragic time, and now he was employed by the Municipal Council. He was the first white man whom I had been able to know and I knew him thoroughly—a man indeed.

He could see quite clearly that Shanghai had no defenses against aggression. Like us, he could foresee the horrors that were to come.

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On the 7th July, 1937, there was an incident at the Marco Polo Bridge. The incident has been written about far too much, and I am not going to keep on repeating it. The incident was notable only for being the actual starting- point of war between China and Japan. Now things were on a wartime basis. Hard times were upon us. The Japanese were aggressive, truculent. Many of the foreign traders, and the Chinese in particular, had foreseen the coming trouble, and they had moved themselves and their families, and their goods to various parts of China, to the inland parts such as Chungking. But peasants in the outlying districts of Shanghai had come pouring into the city, thinking, for some reason, they would be safe, apparently believing in safety in numbers.

Through the streets of the city, by day and by night, poured lorries of the International Brigade, loaded with mercenaries of many different countries, charged with keeping peace in the city itself. All too often they were just plain murderers who had been recruited for their brutality. If there had been any incident at all which they did not like, they would come out in force, and without any warning, without any provocation or cause, they would loosen off their machine guns, rifles, and their revolvers, killing harmless and innocent civilians, and more often than not doing nothing at all against guilty persons. We used to say in Shanghai that it was far better to deal with the Japanese than with the red-faced barbarians, as we called certain members of the International Police Force.

For some time I had been specializing with women, treating them as a physician and as a surgeon, and I had a very satisfactory practice indeed in Shanghai. The experience I gained in those pre-active war days was going to stand me in good stead later. Incidents were becoming more and more frequent.

Reports were coming in of the horrors of the Japanese invasion. Japanese troops and supplies were absolutely pouring into the country, into China. They were ill-treating the peasants, robbing, raping, as they always did. At the end of 1938 the enemy were on the outskirts of the city; the ill-armed Chinese forces fought truly valiantly. They fought to the death. Few indeed there were to be driven back by the Japanese hordes. The Chinese fought as only those who are defending their homeland could fight, but they were overwhelmed by sheer weight of numbers.

Shanghai was declared an open city in the hope that the Japanese would respect the conventions and not bomb the historic place. The city was quite undefended, there were no guns, no weapons of any kind. The military forces were withdrawn. The city was crammed with refugees. The old population had mostly gone. The universities, centres of learning and culture, the big firms, the banks, and others, they had been moved to places like Chungking and to other remote districts. But in their place had come refugees, people of all nations and stations, fleeing from the Japanese, thinking that there was safety in numbers. Air raids were becoming more and more frequent, but people were becoming a little hardened to them, a little used to them.

Then one night the Japanese really bombed the city. Every plane they could get in the air took off, even fighter planes had bombs attached to them, and the pilots also had grenades in the cockpits to toss over the sides. The night sky came thick with planes, flying in formation across a defenseless city, flying like a swarm of locusts, and like a



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swarm of locusts they cleared everything in their path. Bombs were dropping everywhere, indiscriminately. The city was a sea of flames, and there was no defense; we had nothing with which to defend ourselves.

Around midnight I was walking down a road at the height of the uproar. I had been attending a case, a dying woman. Now metal was raining down, and I wondered where to shelter. Suddenly there was a faint whistle, growing to a whine, and then to the blood-curdling screech of a falling bomb. There was a sensation as if all sound, as if all life, had stopped. There was an impression of nothingness, of utter blank. I was picked up as if by a giant hand, twirled about in the air, tossed up in the air, and flung violently.

For some minutes I lay half stunned, with hardly any breath in me, wondering if I were already dead and waiting to continue my journey to the other world. Shakily I picked myself up, and stared about me in absolute stupefaction. I had been walking down a road between two rows of tall houses; now I was standing on a desolate plain with no houses at all on either side, just piles of shattered rubble, piles of thin dust bespattered by blood and parts of human bodies. The houses had been crowded, and the heavy bomb had dropped. It had been so close to me that I had been in the partial vacuum, and for some extraordinary reason I had heard no sound, and had come to no harm. The carnage was simply appalling. In the morning we piled the bodies house high and burned them, burned them to prevent the spread of plague, because under the hot sun the bodies were already decomposing, turning green and swelling. For days we dug beneath the rubble, trying to save any that might be alive, digging out those who were dead, and burning them on the spot in an attempt to save the city from disease.

Late one afternoon I was in an old part of Shanghai. I had just crossed a slanting bridge astraddle a canal. To my right, under a street booth, were same Chinese astrologers and fortune-tellers, sitting at their counters, reading the future for avid customers who were anxious to know if they would survive the war, and if conditions would improve. I looked at them, mildly amused to think that they really believed what these money-makers were telling them.

The fortune-tellers were going by rote through the characters which surrounded the customer's name on a board, telling them of the outcome of the war, telling the women of the safety of their men. A little further on other astrologers—perhaps taking a rest from their professional duties!—were acting as public scribes; they were writing letters for people to send to other parts of China, giving the news, possibly, of family affairs. They made a precarious living writing for those who could not write, and they did it in the open; anyone who cared to stop could listen and know about the private business of the family. In China there is no privacy.

The street scribe used to shout out in a very loud voice what he was writing, so that prospective customers should understand how beautifully he phrased his letters. I continued my walk to a hospital where I was going to do some operations. I went on past the booth of the sellers of incense, past the shops of the secondhand booksellers, who always seem to congregate on the waterside, and who, as in most cities, displayed their wares at the edge of a river. Further on were the vendors of incense and of temple ob-

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jects, such as the statues of the Gods Ho Tai and of Kuan Yin; the first being the God of Good Living, and the second being the Goddess of Compassion. I went on to the hospital, and did my allotted tasks. Later I returned by the same road.

The Japanese had been over with their bombers; bombs had dropped. No longer were there booths or book shops. No longer were there sellers of objects, or of incense, for they and their goods had returned to dust. Fires were raging, buildings were crumbling, so again it was ashes to ashes and dust to dust.

But Po Ku and I had other things to do besides stay in Shanghai. We were going to investigate the possibility of starting an air ambulance service on the direct orders of General Chiang Kai-Shek. I well remember one in particular of these flights. The day was chilly, white fleecy clouds laced overhead. From somewhere over the skyline came the monotonous CRUMP-CRUMP-CRUMP of Japanese bombs. Occasionally there was the far-off drone of aero engines, like the sounds of bees on a hot summer's day. The rough rugged road beside which we sat had borne the weight of many feet that day, and for many days past.

Peasants trudged by in an attempt to escape from the senseless cruelty of the power-mad Japanese. Old peasants almost at the end of their lifespan, pushing along one-wheeled barrows with all their worldly possessions upon them. Peasants bowed down almost to the ground, carrying on their backs almost all they had. Ill-armed troops were going the other way, with scanty equipment loaded onto ox-carts.

They were men going blindly to their death, trying to stop the ruthless advance, trying to protect their country, their homes. Going on blindly not knowing why they had to go on, not knowing what caused the war.

We crouched beneath the wing of an old trimotored plane, an old plane—that had already been worn out before it reached our eager and uncritical hands. Dope was peeling from the canvas-covered wings. The wide undercarriage had been repaired and strengthened with split bamboos, and the tail skid was re-shod with the broken end of a car spring.

Old Abie, as we called her, had never failed us yet. Her engines sometimes stopped, it is true, but only one at a time. She was a high-winged monoplane of a rather famous American make. She had a wooden fabric-covered body, and streamlining was a term unknown when she was made. The modest speed of 120 miles an hour felt at least twice as fast. Fabric drummed, spars creaked and protested, and the wide open exhaust added to the clamour.

A long time ago she had been doped white with huge red crosses on her side and wings. Now she was sadly streaked and marred. Oil from the engines had added a rich ivory-yellow patina, making her look like an old Chinese carving. Petrol overflowing and blowing back contributed other hues, while the various patches added from time to time gave quite a bizarre appearance to the old plane.

Now the racket of crumps had died down. Another Japanese raid was over, and our work was just starting. Once again we checked our meager equipment; saws, two, one

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large and one small and pointed; knives, assorted, four. One of them was an ex-butcher's carver, one was a photographic retouching knife. The other two were authentic scalpels.

Forceps, few in number. Two hypodermic syringes with woefully blunt needles. One aspirating syringe with rubber tubing, and medium trocher. Straps, yes, we must be very sure of them. With no anesthetics we often had to strap our patients down.

It was Po Ku's turn to fly today, and mine to sit in the back and watch for Japanese fighters. Not for us the luxury of an intercom. We had a length of string, one end tied to the pilot, the other jerked by the observer in a crude code.

Warily I swung the propellers, for Abie had a strong backfire. One by one the engines coughed, spat a gout of oily black smoke, and awoke to strident life. Soon they warmed and settled down to a fairly rhythmic roar. I climbed aboard, and made my way to the stern where we had made an observation window in the fabric: Two yanks of the cord and Po Ku was informed that I was safe in position, squatting on the floor, forced in between the struts, crammed. The engine roar increased, and the whole plane shuddered, and moved away down the field. There was a rumbling scrunch of the landing gear, and the creak of twisting woodwork. The tail bobbed, and dipped as we hit ridges. I was bounced from floor to roof. I settled myself even more tightly because I felt like a pea in a pod. With a final thud and clatter the old plane climbed into the air, and the noise became less as the engines were throttled back. A vicious yaw and dip as we hit raising air just clear of the trees, and my face was nearly forced through the observation window. Violent little jerks on the string from Po Ku meaning, "Well, we've made it once again. Are you still there?" My answering jerks as expressive as I could make them, indicating what I thought of his takeoff.

Po Ku could see where we were going. I could see what we had just left. This time we were going to a village in the Wuhu district where there had been heavy raids, and many, many casualties, and no assistance on the spot. We always took turns flying the plane, and acting as observer. Abie had many blind spots, and the Japanese fighters were very fast. Often their speed saved us. We could slow down to a mere fifty when we were not heavily laden, and the average Japanese pilot had no skill at shooting. We used to say that we were safer right in front of them, because they always missed what was in front of their squat noses!

I kept a good lookout, on the alert for hated "blood-pots" which, aptly, were the Japanese planes. The Yellow River passed beneath our tail plane. The cord jerked three times. "We are landing," signaled Po Ku. Up went the tail, the roar of the engines died and was replaced by a pleasant wick-wick, wick-wick" as the propellers idly turned over.

We glided down with motors throttled well back. Creaks from the rudder as we turned slightly to correct our course. Flaps and tremors from the fabric covering as it vibrated in the wide breeze. A sudden short burst from the engines, and the jarring clatter and rumble as we touched down, and rumbled once again from ridge to ridge. Then the moment most hated by the unfortunate observer cramped in the tail; the moment when the tail dropped and the metal shoe ploughed through the parched earth, raising clouds of choking dust, dust laden with particles of human excreta which the Chinese use to

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fertilize the fields.

I unfolded my bulky figure from the cramped space in the tail, and stood up with groans of pain as my circulation started to work again. I climbed up the sloping fuselage towards the door. Po Ku had already got it open, and we dropped to the ground. Running figures came racing up to us.

“Come quickly, we have many casualties. General Tien had a metal bar blown through him, and it is sticking out back and front.”

In the wretched hovel that was being used as an emergency hospital the General sat bolt upright, his normally yellow skin now a drab grey-green from pain and fatigue. From just above the left inguinal canal a bright steel bar protruded. It looked like the rod used to operate car jacks. Whatever it really was, it had been blown through his body by the blast of a near-miss bomb. Certainly I had to remove it with the least possible delay. The end emerging from the back, just above the left sacroiliac crest, was smooth and blunt, and I considered that it had just missed or pushed aside, the descending colon.

After careful examination of the patient I took Po Ku outside, out of hearing of those within, and sent him to the plane on a somewhat unusual mission. While he was away I carefully cleansed the General's wounds, and the metal bar. He was small and old, but in fair physical condition. We had no anesthetics, I told him, but I would be as gentle as possible. “I shall hurt you, no matter how careful I am,” I said. “But I will do my best.”

He was not worried. “Go ahead,” he said. “If nothing is done I shall die anyhow, so I have nothing to lose, but all to gain.”

From the lid of a supply box I pried off a piece of wood, about eighteen inches square, and made a hole in the centre so that it was a tight fit on the metal rod. By this time Po Ku had returned with the plane's tool kit, such as it was.

We carefully threaded the board onto the bar, and Po Ku held it tightly against the patient's body. I gripped the bar with our large Stilton wrench, and pulled gently. Nothing happened, except that the unfortunate patient turned white.

“Well,” I thought, “we can't leave the wretched thing as it is, so it is kill or cure.” I braced my knee against Po Ku, who was holding the board in position, took a fresh grip of the bar, and pulled hard, rotating gently. With a horrid sucking sound the rod came free, and I, off my balance, fell on the back of my head. Quickly I picked myself up, and we hastened to the General and stanching the flow of blood. Peering into the wound with the aid of a flashlight I came to the conclusion that no great damage had been done, so we stitched and cleaned where we could reach.

By now, after taking stimulants, the General was looking much better colour and—as he said—feeling a lot happier. He was now able to lie on his side, whereas before he had had to sit bolt upright, bearing the weight of that heavy metal bar. I left Po Ku to finish the dressing, and went to the next case, a woman who had her right leg blown off just above the knee. A tourniquet had been applied too tightly and for too long. There was only one thing that could be done; we had to amputate the stump.

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We had men tear down a door, and on it we strapped the woman. Quickly I cut around the flesh in a "vee," with the point toward the body. With a fine saw I reached in and severed the bone as high as possible. Then carefully folding the two flaps together I stitched them to form a cushion with the end of the bone. Just over half-an-hour it took, half-an-hour of sheer agony, and all the time the woman was quiet, she made no sound, not the slightest whimper, nor did she flinch. She knew that she was in the hands of friends. She knew that what we did, we did for her good.

There were other cases. Minor injuries, and major ones too, and by the time they had been dealt with it was getting dark. Today it had been Po Ku's turn to fly, to be pilot, but he was quite unable to see in the fading light, and so I had to take over.

We hurried back to the plane, packing away our equipment with loving care. Once again it had served us well. Then Po Ku swung the propellers and started the motors. Stabbing blue-red flames came from our open exhaust, and we must have looked like a fire-eating dragon to one who had never before seen a plane. I clambered aboard, and dropped into the pilot's seat, so tired that I could hardly keep my eyes open. Po Ku tottered in after me, shut the door, and fell asleep on the floor. I waved to the men outside to pull away the big stones chocking the wheels.

It was getting darker and the trees were very hard to see. I had memorized the lie of the land, and raced up the starboard engine to turn us round. There was no wind. Then facing what I hoped was the right direction I opened all three throttles as wide as they could be opened. The engine roared, and the plane trembled and clattered as we moved off, swaying with ever-increasing speed. The instruments were invisible. We had no lights, and I knew that the unseen end of the field was frighteningly close. I pulled back on the control column. The plane rose, faltered and dipped, and rose again. We were airborne. I banked and we turned in a lazy circle, climbing. Just below the cold, night clouds I leveled off, looking for our plain landmark, the Yellow River. There it was off to the left, showing a faint sheen against the darker earth. I watched, too, for any other aircraft in the sky, because I was defenseless. With Po Ku asleep on the floor behind me I had no one to keep a watch from the rear.

Settled on our course I leaned back, thinking how astonishingly tiring these emergency trips could be, having to improvise, to make do, and patch up poor bleeding bodies with anything that came to hand. I thought of the fabulous tales I had heard of hospitals in England and America, and of the immense supplies of materials and instruments they were said to have. But we of China, we had to make do, we had to manage, and go on with our own resources.

Landing was a difficult matter in the almost total darkness. There was only the faint glimmer of the oil lamps in peasants' houses, and the rather darker darkness of trees. But the old plane had to get down somehow, and I put her down with the rumble of the undercarriage and the screech of the tail skid. It did not disturb Po Ku at all; he was sound asleep. I switched off the motors, got out, put the chocks behind and in front of the wheels, then returned to the plane, shut the door, and fell asleep on the floor.

Early in the morning we were both aroused by shouts outside. So we opened the



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door, and there was an orderly to tell us that instead of having a day off, as we thought, we had to take a General to another district where he was going to have an interview with General Chiang Kai-Shek about the war in the Nanking area. This General was a miserable fellow. He had been injured, and he was, theoretically, convalescing. We thought he was malingering.

He was a very self-important man, and all the staff heartily disliked him. We had to straighten ourselves up a bit, so we made our way to our huts to get ourselves clean, to change our uniform because the General was a stickler for exactness in dress. While we were in the huts the rain came teeming down, and our gloom increased as the day became, more and more overcast. Rain! We hated it as much as any Chinaman. One of the sights of China was to see the Chinese soldiers, all brave and hardy men, perhaps among the bravest soldiers in the world, but they hated rain. In China the rain came down in a teeming roar, a continuous downpour. It beat down on everything, soaking everything, soaking everyone who happened to be out in it. As we went back to our plane beneath our umbrellas we saw a detachment of the Chinese army. They marched along the road by the side of the aerodrome, the road which was sodden and squelchy with water. The men looked thoroughly disheartened by the rain. They had enough hardship, enough suffering, and the rain aggravated it greatly.

They marched along dispiritedly, their rifles protected by canvas bags which they had slung on their shoulders. On their backs they had sacks, crisscrossed with rope to keep it intact. Here they kept all their belongings, all their implements of war, their food, everything. On their heads they wore straw hats, and in their right hands, above their heads they carried yellow oiled paper and bamboo umbrellas. Now it would seem amusing. But then it was perfectly ordinary to see five or six hundred soldiers marching down a road under five or six hundred umbrellas. We, too, used umbrellas to get to our plane.

We stared in amazement as we got to the side of the plane. There was a group of people there, and above their heads they were supporting a canopy of canvas, keeping the rain off the General. He beckoned us very imperiously and said, "Which of you has the longer flying experience?"

Po Ku sighed wearily, "I have, General," he said. "I have been flying for ten years, but my comrade is by far the better pilot and has greater experience."

"I am the judge of who is best," said the General. "You will fly, and he will keep good watch over our safety." So Po Ku went to the pilot's compartment. I made my way to the tail of the plane. We tried the engines. I could watch through the little window, and I saw the General and his aides get aboard. There was much ado at the door, much ceremonial, much waving bowing, and then an orderly closed the door of the plane and two mechanics pulled aside the chocks at the wheels. A wave to Po Ku, and the engines were revved up. He gave me a signal on our cord and we moved off.

I did not feel at all happy about this flight. We were going to fly over the Japanese lines, and the Japanese were very alert as to who flew over their positions. Worse than that, we had three fighters—only three—which were supposed to be guarding us. We knew that they would serve as a great attraction to the Japanese, because the Japanese

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fighters would come up to see what was the matter, why should an old tri-motored plane like ours have fighter planes guarding it? However, as the General had stated so unmistakably, he was the senior, and he was the one who was giving the orders, and so we lumbered on. We lumbered down to the end of the field. With a swirl of dust, and a clatter of the undercarriage, the plane swung round, the three engines revved up to their limit and we rushed down the field. With a clank and a roar the old plane leapt into the air. We circled round for a time to gain height. That was not our custom, but on this occasion it was our orders.

Gradually we got up to five thousand, ten thousand feet. Ten thousand was about our ceiling. We continued to circle around until the three fighters took off, and took formation above us and behind us. I felt absolutely naked, stuck up there with those three fighter planes hanging about. Every now and again I could see one slide into view from my window, and then gradually drop back out of my range of vision. It gave me no feeling of security to see them there. On the contrary, I feared every moment to see Japanese planes as well.

We droned on, and on. It seemed endless. We seemed to be suspended between heaven and earth, There were slight rocks and bumps, the plane swayed a little, and my mind wandered with the monotony of it. I thought of the war going on beneath us down on the ground. I thought of the atrocities, of the horrors, so many of which I had seen. I thought of my beloved Tibet, and how pleasant it would be if I could take even old Abie and fly off and land at the foot of the Potala in Lhasa. Suddenly there were loud bangs, the sky seemed to be filled with whirling planes, planes with the hated "bloodspot" on their wings. I could see them coming into view, and darting out again. I could see tracers and the black smoke of cannon fire. There was no point in my giving signals to Po Ku. It was self-evident that we were being heavily fired upon. Old Abie lurched and dived, and rose again. Her nose went up, and we seemed to claw at the sky. Po Ku was putting us into violent maneuvers, I thought, and I had my work cut out to maintain my position in the tail.

Suddenly bullets came whizzing through the fabric just in front of me. At my side a wire twanged, and snapped, and the end of it scraped my face just missing my left eye. I made myself as small as I could and tried to force myself further back in the tail. There was a ferocious battle in progress, a battle which was now in full view, because bullets had torn a dotted line on the fabric, and the window had gone, and many feet of materiel as well.

I seemed to be sitting up in the clouds on a wooden framework. The battle ebbed and flowed, then there was tremendous "CRUMP." The whole plane shook and the nose dropped. I took one frantic look from the window. Japanese planes seemed to fill the sky. As I watched I saw a Japanese and a Chinese plane collide. There was a "BOOM" and a gout of orange-red flame followed by black smoke, and the two planes went whirling down together locked in a death embrace. The pilots spewed out, and fell whirling, hands and legs outstretched, turning over and over like wheels. It reminded me of my early kite flying days in Tibet, when the lama fell out of a kite and went whirling down in much the same way, to crash upon the rock thousands of feet below.

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Once again the whole plane shuddered violently, and went wing over wing, like a falling leaf. I thought that the end had come. The nose dropped, the tail rose with such suddenness that I slid straight down the fuselage into the cabin, and into a scene of sheerest horror. The General lay dead; strewn around the cabin were the bodies of the attendants. Cannon shells had ripped through them and just about blown them to bits. All his attendants or aids were either dead or dying. The cabin was a complete shambles. I wrenched open the door of the pilot's compartment and recoiled, feeling sick. Inside was the headless body of Po Ku, hunched over the controls. His head, or what remained of it, was spattered over the instrument panel. The windscreen was a bloody mess, blood and brains.

It was so obscured that I could not see out of it. Quickly I seized Po Ku around the shoulders, and threw him aside from the seat. With utter haste I sat down, and grabbed the controls. They were thrashing about, jumping violently. They were slimy with blood, and it was with extreme difficulty that I could hold them. I pulled back on the control column to try and bring up the nose. But I could not see.

I crossed my legs over the column and shuddered using my bare hands to scrape the brains and the blood from the windscreen, to try and make a patch so that I could see.

The ground was rushing up. I saw it through the red haze of Po Ku's blood. Things were getting larger and larger. The plane was trembling, the engines were screeching. The throttles had no effect whatever upon them. The port wing engine jumped straight out. After that the starboard engine exploded. With the weight of those two gone the nose rose slightly. I pulled back harder and harder. The nose rose slightly more but it was too late, much too late. The plane was too battered to answer its controls properly. I had managed to slow it somewhat, but not enough to make a satisfactory landing. The ground appeared to rise up; the wheels touched, the nose fell even more. There was a shocking scrunch, and the rending of woodwork. I felt as if the world was disintegrating around me as, together with the pilot's seat, I shot right out through the bottom of the plane into an odorous mass. There was absolutely excruciating pain in my legs, and for a time I knew no more.

It could not have been very long before I regained consciousness, because I awoke to the sound of gunfire, I looked up. Japanese planes were flying down; there were flashes of red from the gun muzzles. They were shooting at the wreckage of Old Abie, shooting to make sure there was no one in it. A little flicker of fire started at the engine, the only engine left, in the nose. It ran around toward the cabin where the fabric had been saturated with petrol.

There was a sudden flare of white flame topped by black smoke. Petrol was spilling on the ground, and it looked as if there was flame pouring down because the petrol was alight. Then there was just a boom, and wreckage came raining down, and Abie was no more. Satisfied at last, the Japanese planes made off.

Now I had time to look about me, and to see where I was. To my horror I found that I was in a deep drainage ditch, in a sewer. In China many of the sewers are open and I was in one of them. The stench was simply appalling I consoled myself with the thought that

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at least the position in which I had found myself had saved me from Japanese bullets, or from fire. Quickly I freed myself from the wreckage of the pilot's seat. I found that I had snapped both ankles, but with considerable effort I managed to crawl along on hands and knees, scrabbling at the crumbling earth to reach the top of the ditch, and to escape from the clinging mess of sewage.

At the top of the bank, just across from the flames which still flickered on the petrol saturated earth, I fainted again with pain and exhaustion, but heavy kicks in my ribs soon brought me back to consciousness. Japanese soldiers had been attracted to the spot by the flames, and they had found me.

"Here is one who is alive," said a voice. I opened my eyes, and there was a Japanese soldier with a rifle with a fixed bayonet. The bayonet was drawn back, ready for a thrust at my heart. "I had to bring him back, so that he would know he was being killed," he said to a comrade of his, and he made to thrust at me. At that moment an officer came hurrying along. "Stop" he shouted. "Take him to the camp. We will make him tell us who were the occupants of this plane, and why they were so guarded. Take him to the camp. We will question him."

So the soldier slung his rifle on his shoulder, and caught hold of me by the collar and started to drag me along. "Heavy one, this. Give me a hand," he said. One of his companions came over and caught me by an arm. Together they dragged me along, scraping off the skin of my legs at the same time as I was pulled along the stony ground. At last the officer, who apparently was doing a routine inspection, returned. With a roar of rage he shouted, "Carry him." He looked at my bleeding body, and at the trail of blood I was leaving behind, and he smacked the two guards across the face with the flat of his hand. "If he loses any more blood there will not be enough man to question, and I shall hold you responsible," he said. So for a time I was allowed to rest on the ground while one of the guards went off in search of some sort of conveyance, because I was a large man, quite bulky, and the Japanese guards were small and insignificant.

Eventually I was tossed like a sack of rubbish on to a one-wheeled barrow, and carried off to a building which the Japanese were using as a prison. Here I was just tipped off, and again dragged by the collar to a cell and left to myself. The door was slammed and locked, and the soldiers set to guard outside. After a few moments I managed to set my ankles, and put splints on. The splints were odd pieces of wood which happened to be in the cell which apparently had been used as some sort of store. To bind these splints I had to tear strips from my clothing.

For days I lay in the prison, in the solitary cell, with only rats and spiders for company. Fed once a day on a quart of water and on scraps left over from the tables of the Japanese guards, scraps which perhaps they had chewed, and found unsatisfying, and spat out. But it was the only food I had. It must have been more than a week that I was kept there, because my broken bones were getting well. Then, after midnight, the door was roughly flung open, and Japanese guards entered noisily. I was dragged to my feet. They had to support me because my ankles were still not strong enough to take my weight. Then an officer came in and smacked me across the face. "Your name?" he said.

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"I am an officer of the Chinese forces, and I am a prisoner-of-war. That is all I have to say," I replied.

"MEN do not allow themselves to be taken prisoners. Prisoners are scum without rights. You will answer me," said the officer. But I made no reply.

So they knocked me about the head with the flat of their swords, they punched me, kicked me, and spat at me. As I still did not answer they burned me about the face and body with lighted cigarettes, and put lighted matches between my fingers. My training had not been in vain. I said nothing, they could not make me talk. I just kept silent and put my mind to other thoughts, knowing that that was the best way of doing things. Eventually a guard brought a rifle butt down across my back, knocking the wind out of me, and almost stunning me with the violence of the blow. The officer walked across to me, spat in my face, gave me a hard kick and said,

"We shall be back, you will speak then." I had collapsed on the floor, so I stayed there; there was no other place to rest.

I tried to recover my strength somewhat. That night there was no further disturbance, nor did I see anyone the next day, nor the day after that, nor the day after that. For three days and four nights I was kept with no food, no water and without seeing anyone at all. Kept in suspense wondering what would happen next.

On the fourth day an officer came again, a different one and said that they were going to look after me, that they were going to treat me well, but that I in return must tell them all that I knew about the Chinese, and about the Chinese forces and Chiang Kai-Shek. They said that they had found out who I was, that I was a high noble from Tibet, and they wanted Tibet to be friendly with them. I thought to myself "Well they are certainly showing a peculiar form of friendship," The officer just made a bow, turned, and left.

For a week I was reasonably well treated, given two meals a day, and water, and that was all. Not enough water, and not enough food, but at least they left me alone. But then three of them came together, and said that they were going to question me, and I was going to answer their questions. They brought a Japanese doctor in with them who examined me, and said that I was in bad shape, but I was well enough to be questioned. He looked at my ankles and said that it was a marvel that I could possibly walk after. Then they bowed ceremoniously to me, and ceremoniously to each other, and trooped out like a gang of schoolboys. Once again the cell door clanged behind them, and I knew that later on that day I was going to face interrogation once again. I composed my mind, and determined that no matter what they did I would not betray the Chinese.



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## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **When the World was Very Young**

IN THE EARLY HOURS of next morning, long before the first streaks of dawn appeared in the sky the cell door was flung open violently, to recoil against the stone wall with a clang. Guards rushed in, I was dragged to my feet, and shaken roughly by three or four men. Then handcuffs were put upon me, and I was marched off to a room which seemed to be a long, long way away. The guards kept prodding me with their rifle butts, not gently either. Each time they did this, which was all too frequent, they yelled, "Answer all questions promptly, you enemy of peace. We will get the truth from you."

Eventually we reached the Interrogation Room. Here there were a group of officers sitting in a semicircle, looking fierce, or trying to look fierce. Actually, to me, they seemed to be a gang of schoolboys who were out for a sadistic treat. They all bowed ceremoniously as I was brought in.

Then a senior officer, a colonel, exhorted me to tell the truth. He assured me that the Japanese people were friendly, and peace-loving. But I, he said, was an enemy of the Japanese people because I was trying to resist their peaceful penetration into China. China, he told me, should have been a colony of the Japanese, because China was without culture! He continued. "We Japanese are true friends of peace. You must tell us all. Tell us of the Chinese movements, and of their strength, and of your talks with Chiang Kai-Shek, so that we may crush the rebellion of China without loss of our own soldiers."

I said, "I am a prisoner-of-war, and demand to be treated as such. I have nothing more to say."

He said, "We have to see that all men live in peace under the Emperor. We are going to have an expanded Japanese Empire. You will tell the truth." They were not at all gentle in their methods of questioning. They wanted information, and they didn't mind what they did to get that information. I refused to say anything, so they knocked me down with rifle butts—rifle butts dashed brutally against my chest or back, or at my knees. Then I was pulled to my feet again by guards so that I could be knocked down again. After many, many hours, during which time I was burned with cigarette ends, they decided

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that stronger measures were called for. I was bound hand and foot, and dragged off again to an underground cell. Here I was kept bound hand and foot for several days.

The Japanese method of tying prisoners led to excruciating pain. My wrists were tied behind me with my hands pointing to the back of my neck. Then my ankles were tied to my wrists, and legs were folded at the knees, so that the soles of the feet also faced the back of the neck. Then a rope was passed from my left ankle and wrist around my neck, and down to the right ankle and wrist. So that if I tried to ease my position at all I half strangled myself. It was indeed a painful process, being kept like a strong bow. Every so often a guard would come in and kick me just to see what happened.

For several days I was kept like that, being unbound for half-an-hour a day only; for several days they kept me like that, and they kept coming and asking for information. I made no sound or response other than to say, "I am an officer of the Chinese forces, a noncombatant officer. I am a doctor and a prisoner-of-war. I have nothing more to say." Eventually they got tired of asking me questions, so they brought in a hose, and they poured strongly peppered water into my nostrils. I felt as if my whole brain was on fire. It felt as if devils were stoking the flames within me. But I did not speak, and they kept on mixing a stronger solution of pepper and water, adding mustard to it.

The pain was quite considerable. Eventually bright blood came out of my mouth. The pepper had burned out the linings of my nostrils. I had managed to survive this for ten days, and I supposed it occurred to them that that method would not make me talk, so, at sight of the bright red blood, they went away.

Two or three days later they came for me again, and carried me to the Interrogation Room. I had to be carried because this time I could not walk in spite of my efforts, in spite of being bludgeoned with gun butts and pricked with bayonets. My hands and legs had been bound for so long that I just could not use them at all. Inside the Interrogation Room I was just dropped to the floor, and the guards—four of them—who had been carrying me stood to attention before the officers who were sitting in a semicircle.

This time they had before them many strange implements which I, from my studies, knew to be instruments of torture. "You will tell us the truth now, and cease to waste our time," said the colonel.

"I have told you I am an officer of the Chinese forces." That was all I said in reply.

The Japanese went red in the face with anger, and at a command I was strapped to a board with my arms outstretched as if I was on a cross. Long slivers of bamboo were inserted beneath my nails right down to the little finger joints, then the slivers were rotated. It really was painful, but it still brought no response. So the guards quickly pulled out the slivers, and then slowly, one by one my nails were split off backwards. The pain was truly devilish. It was worse when the Japanese dropped salt water onto the bleeding finger ends. I knew that I must not talk and betray my comrades, and so I called to mind the advice of my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup. "Do not concentrate on the seat of pain, Lobsang, for if you do you focus all your energies on that spot, and then the pain cannot be borne. Instead think of something else. Control your mind, and think of some-

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thing else, because if you do that you will still have the pain and the aftereffects of pain, but you will be able to bear it. It will seem as something in the background.” So to keep my sanity, and to avoid giving names and information I put my mind to other things. I thought of the past, of my home in Tibet, and of my Guide. I thought of the beginnings of things as we knew them in Tibet.

Beneath the Potala were hidden mysterious tunnels, tunnels which may hold the key to the history of the world. These interested me, they fascinated me, and it may be of interest to recall once again what I saw and learned there, for it is knowledge apparently not possessed by Western peoples.

I remembered how at the time I was a very young monk in training. The Inmost One, the Dalai Lama, had been making use of my services at the Potala as a clairvoyant, and He had been well pleased with me and as a reward had given me the run of the place. My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, sent for me one day, “Lobsang I have been thinking a lot about your evolution, and I have come to the conclusion that you are now of such an age and have attained such a state of development that you can study with me the writings in the hidden caves. Come!”

He rose to his feet, and with me at his side we went out of his room, down the corridor, down many many steps, past groups of monks working at their daily tasks, attending to the domestic economy of the Potala. Eventually, far down in the gloom of the mountain, we came to a little room branching off to the right of the corridor. Little light came through the windows here. Outside the ceremonial prayer flags flapped in the breeze. “We will enter here, Lobsang, so that we may explore those regions to which only few lamas have access.”

In the little room we took lamps from the shelves, and filled them. Then as a precaution, we each took a spare. Our main lamps were lit, and we walked out, and down the corridor, my Guide ahead of me showing me the way. Down we went, down the corridor, ever down. At long last we came to a room at the end. It seemed to be the end of a journey to me. It appeared to be a storeroom. Strange figures were about, images, sacred objects, and foreign gods, gifts from all the world over. Here was where the Dali Lama kept his overflow of gifts, those for which he had no immediate use.

I looked about me with intense curiosity. There was no sense in being here so far as I could see. I thought we were going exploring, and this was just a storage room. “Illustrious Master,” I said, “surely we have mistaken our path in coming here?” The lama looked at me and smiled benevolently. “Lobsang, Lobsang, do you think I would lose my way?”

He smiled as he turned away from me, and walked to a far wall. For a moment he looked about him and then did something. As far as I could see he was fiddling about with some pattern on the wall, some plaster protuberance apparently fabricated by some long-dead hand. Eventually there was a rumble as of falling stones and I spun around in alarm, thinking that perhaps the ceiling was caving in or the floor was collapsing. My Guide laughed. “Oh, no, Lobsang, we are quite safe, quite safe. This is where we continue our journey. This is where we step into another world. A world that few have seen. Follow me.”

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I looked in awe. The section of the wall had slid aside revealing a dark hole. I could see a dusty path going from the room into the hole, and disappearing into the Stygian gloom. The sight rooted me to the spot in astonishment. "But Master!" I exclaimed, "there was no sign of a door at all there. How did it happen so?"

My Guide laughed at me, and said, "This is an entry which was made centuries ago. The secret of it has been well preserved. Unless one knows one cannot open this door, and no matter how thoroughly one searches there is no sign of a joint or of a crack. But come, Lobsang, we are not discussing building procedure. We are wasting time. You will see this place often." With that he turned and led the way into the hole, into the mysterious tunnel reaching far ahead. I followed with considerable trepidation. He allowed me to go past him, then he turned and again manipulated something.

Again came the ominous rumbling and creaking and grating, and a whole panel of the living rock slid before my startled eyes and covered the hole. We were now in darkness, lit only by the flickering glimmer of the golden-flamed butter lamps which we carried. My Guide passed me, and marched on. His footsteps, muffled though they were, echoed curiously from the rock sides, echoed, and reechoed. He walked on without speaking. We seemed to cover more than a mile, then suddenly without warning, so suddenly that I bumped into him with an exclamation of astonishment, the lama ahead of me stopped. "Here we replenish our lamps, Lobsang, and put in bigger wicks. We shall need light now. Do as I do, and then we will continue our journey."

Now we had a somewhat brighter flame to light our way, and we continued for a long, long way, for so long that I was getting tired and fidgety. Then I noticed that the passageway was getting wider and higher. It seemed as if we were walking along the narrow end of a funnel, approaching the wider end. We rounded a corridor and I shouted in amazement. I saw before me a vast cavern.

From the roof and sides came innumerable pinpoints of golden light, light reflected from our butter lamps. The cavern appeared to be immense. Our feeble illumination only emphasized the immensity and the darkness of it.

My Guide went to a crevice at the left-side of the path, and with a screech dragged out what appeared to be a large metal cylinder. It seemed to be half as high as a man and certainly as wide as a man at the thickest part. It was round, and there was a device at the top which I did not understand. It seemed to be a small, white net. The Lama Mingyar Dondup fiddled about with the thing, and then touched the top of it with his butter lamp. Immediately there was a bright yellow-white flame which enabled me to see clearly. There was a faint hissing from the light, as it was being forced out under pressure. My Guide extinguished our little lamps then. "We shall have plenty of light with this, Lobsang, we will take it with us. I want you to learn some of the history from aeons of long ago."

I moved ahead pulling this great bright light, this flaming canister, on a thing like a little sledge. It moved easily. We walked on down the path once again, ever down, until I thought that we must be right down in the bowels of the earth. Eventually he stopped. Before me was a black wall, shot with a great panel of gold, and on the gold were engravings, hundreds, thousands of them. I looked at them then I looked away to the other

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side. I could see the black shimmer of water, as if before me was a great lake.

“Lobsang, pay attention to me. You will know about that later. I want to tell you a little of the origin of Tibet, an origin which in later years you will be able to verify for yourself when you go upon an expedition which I am even now planning,” he said. “When you go away from our land you will find those who know us not who will say that Tibetans are illiterate savages who worship devils and indulge in unmentionable rites. But Lobsang, we have culture far older than any in the West, we have records carefully hidden and preserved going back through the ages.”

He went across to the inscriptions and pointed out various figures, various symbols. I saw drawings of people, of animals—animals such as we know not now—and then he pointed out a map of the sky, but a map which even I knew was not of the present day because the stars it showed were different and in the wrong places. The lama paused, and turned to me. “I understand this, Lobsang, I was taught this language. Now I will read it to you, read you this age-old story, and then in the days to come I and others will teach you this secret language so that you can come here and make your own notes, keep your own records, and draw your own conclusions. It will mean study, study, study. You will have to come and explore these caverns for there are many of them and they extend for miles beneath us.”

For a moment he stood looking at the inscriptions. Then he read to me part of the past. Much of what he said then, and very much more of what I studied later, simply cannot be given in a book such as this. The average reader would not believe, and if he did and he knew some of the secrets then he might do as others have done in the past; use the devices which I have seen for self-gain, to obtain mastery over others, and to destroy others as nations are now threatening to destroy each other with the atom bomb. The atom bomb is not a new discovery. It was discovered thousands of years ago, and it brought disaster to the earth then as it will do now if man is not stopped in his folly.

In every religion of the world, in every history of every tribe and nation, there is the story of the Flood, of a catastrophe in which peoples were drowned, in which lands sank and land rose, and the earth was in turmoil. That is in the history of the Incas, the Egyptians, the Christians—everyone. That, so we know, was caused by a bomb; but let me tell you how it happened, according to the inscriptions.

My Guide seated himself in the lotus position, facing the inscriptions on the rock, with the brilliant light at his back shining with a golden glare upon those age-old engravings. He motioned for me to be seated also. I took my place by his side, so that I could see the features to which he pointed. When I had settled myself he started to talk, and this is what he told me.

“In the days of long, long ago earth was a very different place. It revolved much nearer the sun, and in the opposite direction, and there was another planet nearby, a twin of the earth. Days were shorter, and so man seemed to have a longer life. Man seemed to live for hundreds of years. The climate was hotter, and flora was both tropical and luxurious. Fauna grew to huge size and in many diverse forms. The force of gravity was much less than it is at present because of the different rate of rotation of the earth, and



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man was perhaps twice as large as he is now, but even he was a pygmy compared to another race who lived with him. For upon the earth lived those of a different system who were superintellectuals. They supervised the earth, and taught men much. Man then was as a colony, a class that is being taught by a kindly teacher. These huge giants taught him much. Often they would get strange craft of gleaming metal and would sweep across the sky. Man, poor ignorant man, still upon the threshold of dawning reason, could not understand it at all, for his intellect was hardly greater than that of the apes.

“For countless ages life on earth followed a placid path. There was peace and harmony between all creatures. Men could converse without speech, by telepathy. They used speech only for local conversations. Then the superintellectuals, who were so much larger than man, quarreled. Dissident forces rose up among them. They could not agree on certain issues just as races now cannot agree. One group went off to another part of the world, and tried to rule. There was strife. Some of the supermen killed each other, and they waged fierce wars, and brought much destruction to each other. Man, eager to learn, learned the arts of war; man learned to kill. So the earth which before had been a peaceful place became a troubled spot. For some time, for some years, the supermen worked in secret, one half of them against the other half. One day there was a tremendous explosion, and the whole earth seemed to shake and veer in its course. Lurid flames shot across the sky, and the earth was wreathed in smoke. Eventually the uproar died down, but after many months strange signs were seen in the sky, signs that filled the people of earth with terror. A planet was approaching, and rapidly growing bigger, and bigger. It was obvious that it was going to strike the earth. Great tides arose, and the winds with it, and the days and nights were filled with a howling tempestuous fury. A planet appeared to fill the whole sky until at last it seemed that it must crash straight onto the earth. As the planet got closer and closer, immense tidal waves arose and drowned whole tracts of land. Earthquakes shivered the surface of the globe, and continents were swallowed in the twinkling of an eye. The race of supermen forgot the quarrels; they hastened to their gleaming machines, and rose up into the sky, and sped away from the trouble besetting the earth. But on the earth itself earthquakes continued; mountains rose up, and the seabed rose with them; lands sank and were inundated with water; people of that time fled in terror, crazed with fear at what they thought was the end of the world, and all the time the winds grew fiercer, and the uproar and the clamor harder to bear, uproar and clamour which seemed to shatter the nerves and drive men to frenzy.

“The invading planet grew closer and larger, until at last it approached to within a certain distance and there was a tremendous crash, and a vivid electric spark shot from it. The skies flamed with continuous discharges, and soot-black clouds formed and turned the days into a continuous night of fearful terror. It seemed that the sun itself stood still with horror at the calamity, for, according to the records, for many, many days the red ball of the sun stood still, blood-red with great tongues of flame shooting from it. Then eventually the black clouds closed, and all was night. The winds grew cold, then hot; thousands died with the change of temperature, and the change again. Food of the Gods, which some called manna, fell from the sky. Without it the people of the earth, and the animals of the world, would have starved through the destruction of the crops, through the deprivation of all other food.

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“Men and women wandered from place to place looking for shelter, looking for anywhere where they could rest their weary bodies wracked by the storm, tortured by turmoil; praying for quiet, hoping to be saved. But the earth shook and shivered, the rains poured down, and all the time from the outer space came the splashes and discharges of electricity. With the passage of time, as the heavy black clouds rolled away, the sun was seen to be becoming smaller, and smaller. It seemed to be receding, and the people of the world cried out in fear. They thought the Sun God, the Giver of Life, was as running away from them. But stranger still the sun now moved across the sky from east to west, instead of from west to east as before.

“Man had lost all track of time. With the obscuring of the sun there was no method with which they could tell its passage; not even the wisest men knew how long ago these events had taken place. Another strange thing was seen in the sky; a world, quite a large world, yellow, gibbous which seemed as if it too was going to fall upon the earth. This which we now know as the moon appeared at this time as a relic from the collision of the two planets. Later races were to find a great depression in the earth, in Siberia where perhaps the surface of the earth had been damaged by the close proximity of another world, or even a spot from whence the moon had been wrenched.

“Before the collision there had been cities and tall buildings housing much knowledge of the Greater Race. They had been toppled in the turmoil, and they were just mounds of rubble, concealing all that hidden knowledge. The wise men of the tribes knew that within the mounds were canisters containing specimens and books of engraved metal. They knew that all the knowledge in the world reposed within those piles of rubbish, and so they set to work to dig, and dig, to see what could be saved in the records, so that they could increase their own power by making use of the knowledge of the Greater Race.

“Throughout the years to come the days became longer and longer, until they were almost twice as long as before the calamity, and then the earth settled in its new orbit, accompanied by its moon, the moon, a product of a collision. But still the earth shook and rumbled, and mountains rose and spewed out flames and rocks, and destruction. Great rivers of lava rushed down the mountain sides without warning, destroying all that lay in their path, but often enclosing monuments and sources of knowledge, for the hard metal upon which many of the records had been written was not melted by the lava, but merely protected by it, preserved in a casing of stone, porous stone which in the course of time eroded away, so that the records contained within would be revealed and would fall into the hands of those who would make use of them. But that was not for a long time yet. Gradually, as the earth became more settled in its new orbit, cold crept upon the world, and animals died or moved to the warmer areas. The mammoth and the brontosaurus died for they could not adapt to the new ways of life. Ice fell from the sky, and the winds grew bitter. Now there were many clouds, whereas before there had been almost none. The world was a very different place; the sea had tides; before they had been placid lakes, , unruffled except by the passing breeze.

“Now great waves lashed up at the sky, and for years the tides were immense and threatened to engulf the land and drown the people. The heavens looked different too.

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At night strange stars were seen in place of the familiar ones and the moon was very close. New religions sprouted as the priests of that time tried to maintain their power and account for the happenings. They forgot much about the Greater Race, they thought only of their own power, of their own importance. But—they could not say how this occurred, or how that happened. They put it down to the wrath of God, and taught that all man was born in sin.

“With the passage of time, with the earth settled in its new orbit, and as the weather became more tranquil, people grew smaller and shorter. The centuries rolled by, and lands became more stable.

Many races appeared as if experimentally, struggled, failed, and disappeared, to be replaced by others. At last a stronger type evolved, and civilization began anew, civilization which carried from its earliest days a racial memory of some dire calamity, and some of the stronger intellects made search to find out what had really happened. By now the wind and the rain had done their work. The old records were beginning to appear from the crumbling lava stone, and the higher intellect of humans now upon the earth were able to gather these and place them before their wise men, who at long last, with much struggle, were able to decipher some of the writings. As little of the records became legible, and as the scientists of the day began to understand them, they set about frantic searches for other records with which to piece together the complete instructions, and to bridge the gaps. Great excavations were undertaken, and much of interest came to light. Then indeed the new civilization sprouted. Towns and cities were built, and science started its rush to destroy. The emphasis always on destruction, upon gaining power for little groups. It was completely overlooked that man could live in peace, and that the lack of peace had caused the calamity before.

“For many centuries science held sway. The priests set up as scientists, and they outlawed all those scientists who were not also priests. They increased their power; they worshipped science, they did all they could to keep power in their own hands, and to crush the ordinary man and stop him from thinking. They set themselves up as Gods; no work could be done without the sanction of the priests. What the priests wanted they took, without hindrance without opposition, and all the time they were increasing their power until upon earth they were absolutely omnipotent, forgetting that for humans absolute power corrupts.

“Great craft sailed through the air without wings, without sound, sailed through the air, or hovered motionless; not even the birds could hover. The scientists had discovered the secret of mastering gravity, and antigravity, and harnessing it to their power. Immense blocks of stone were maneuvered into position where wanted by one man and a very small device which could be held in the palm of one hand. No work was too hard, because man merely manipulated his machines without effort to himself. Huge engines clattered across the surface of the earth, but nothing moved upon the surface of the sea except for pleasure because travel by sea was too slow except for those who wanted the enjoyment of the combination of wind and the waves. Everything traveled by air, or for shorter journeys across the earth. People moved out to different lands, and set up colonies. But now they had lost their telepathic power through the calamity of the collision.

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Now they no longer spoke a common language; the dialects became more and more acute, until in the end they were completely different, and to each other incomprehensible, languages.

“With the lack of communication, and the failure to understand each other, and each other’s view points, races quarreled, and began wars. Fearsome weapons were invented. Battles raged everywhere. Men and women were becoming maimed, and the terrible rays which were being produced were making many mutations in the human race. Years rolled by, and the struggle became more intense, and the carnage more terrible. Inventors everywhere, spurred on by their rulers, strove to produce more deadly weapons. Scientists worked to devise even more ghastly devices of offence. Disease germs were bred, and dropped upon the enemy from high-flying aircraft. Bombs wrecked the sewage and plagues raged through the earth blighting people, animals, and plants. The earth was set on destruction.

“In a remote district far from all the strife a group of farseeing priests who had not been contaminated by the search for power, took thin plates of gold, and engraved upon them the history of their times, engraved upon them maps of the heavens and of the lands. Upon them they revealed the innermost secrets of their science, and gave grave warnings of the dangers which would befall those who misused this knowledge. Years passed during which time these plates were prepared, and then, with specimens of the actual weapons, tools, books, and all useful things, they were concealed in stone and were hidden in various places so that those who came after them would know of the past, and would, it was hoped, profit from it. For the priests knew of the course of humanity; they knew what was to happen, and as predicted the expected did happen. A fresh weapon was made, and tried. A fantastic cloud swirled up into the stratosphere, and the earth shook, and reeled again, and seemed to rock on its axis. Immense walls of water surged over the land, and swept away many of the races of man. Once again mountains sank beneath the seas, and others rose up to take their place. Some men, women, and animals, who had been warned by these priests were saved by being afloat in ships, afloat and sealed against the poisonous gases and germs which ravaged the earth. Other men and women were carried high into the air as the lands upon which they dwelt rose up; others, not so fortunate, were carried down, perhaps beneath the water, perhaps down as the mountains closed over their heads.

“Flood and flames and lethal rays killed people in millions, and very few people only were left on earth now isolated from each other by vagaries of the catastrophe. These were half-crazed by the disaster, shaken out of their senses by the tremendous noise and commotion. For many years they hid in caves and in thick forests. They forgot all the culture, and they went back to the wild stages, in the earliest days of mankind, covering themselves with skin and with the juice of berries, and carrying clubs studded with flint in their hands.

“Eventually new tribes were formed, and they wandered over the new face of the world. Some settled in what is now Egypt, others in China, but those of the pleasant low-lying seaside resort, which had been much favoured by the super-race, suddenly found themselves many thousands feet above the sea, ringed by the eternal mountains, and

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with the land fast cooling. Thousands died in the bitter rarefied air. Others who survived became the founders of the modern, hardy Tibetan of the land which is now Tibet. That had been the place in which the group of farseeing priests had taken their thin plates of gold, and engraved upon them all their secrets. Those plates, and all the specimens of their arts and crafts, had been hidden deep in a cavern in a mountain to become accessible to a later race of priests. Others were hidden in a great city which is now in the Chang Tang Highlands of Tibet.

“All culture was not quite extinct, however, although mankind was back in the savage state, in the Black Ages. But there were isolated spots throughout the earth’s surface where little groups of men and women struggled on to keep knowledge alive, to keep alight the flickering flame of human intellect, a little group struggling on blindly in the stygian darkness of savagery. Throughout the centuries which followed there were many states of religion, many attempts to find the truth of what had happened, and all the time hidden away in Tibet in deep caves was knowledge. Engraved upon plates of imperishable gold, permanent, uncorruptible, waiting for those who could find them, and decipher them.

“Gradually man developed once again. The gloom of ignorance began to dissipate. Savagery turned to semi-civilization. There was actually progress of a sort. Again cities were built, and machines flew in the sky. Once more mountains were no bar, man traveled throughout the world, across the seas, and over the land. As before, with the increase of knowledge and power, they became arrogant, and oppressed weaker peoples. There was unrest, hatred, persecution, and secret research. The stronger people oppressed the weak. The weaker peoples developed machines, and there were wars, wars again lasting years. Ever there were fresh and more terrible weapons being produced. Each side sought to find the most terrible weapons of all, and all the time in caves in Tibet knowledge was lying. At the time in the Chang Tang Highlands a great city lay desolate, unguarded, containing the most precious knowledge in the world, waiting for those who would enter, and see, lying, just waiting.”

Lying. I was lying on my back in an underground cell in a prison, looking up through a red haze. Blood was pouring from my nose, from my mouth, from the ends of my fingers, and toes. I ached all over. I felt as if I was immersed in a bath of flame. Dimly I heard a Japanese voice say, “You’ve gone too far this time. He cannot live. He cannot possibly live.” But I did live. I determined that I would live on, and show the Japanese how a man of Tibet conducted himself. I would show them not even the most devilish tortures would make a Tibetan speak.

My nose was broken, was squashed flat against my face by an angry bang from a rifle butt. My mouth was gashed, my jaw bones were broken, my teeth kicked out. But not all the tortures of the Japanese could make me talk. After a time they gave up the attempt, for even the Japanese could realize the futility of trying to make a man talk when he would not. After many weeks I was set to work dealing with the bodies of others who had not survived. The Japanese thought that by giving me such a job they would eventually break my nerve, and perhaps then I would talk.



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Piling up bodies in the heat of the sun, bodies stinking bloated, and discolored, was not pleasant. Bodies would swell up, and burst like pricked balloons. One day I saw a man fall dead. I knew he was dead because I examined him myself but the guards took no notice; he was just picked up by two men, and swung and tossed on to the pile of dead bodies, and left, left so that the hot sun and the rats could do the work of scavenging. But it did not matter if a man was dead or not, because if a man was too ill to work he was either bayoneted on the spot and tossed on to the dead pile, or he was tossed on while he was still alive.

I decided that I too would “die,” and would be placed with the other bodies. During the hours of darkness I would escape. So I made my few plans, and for the next three or four days I carefully watched the Japanese and their procedure, and decided on how I would act. For a day or so I staggered, and acted as if I were weaker than I really was. The day on which I planned to “die” I staggered as I walked, staggered as I attended rollcall at the first light of dawn. Throughout the morning I showed every sign of utter weariness, and then, just after noon, I let myself collapse. It was not difficult, not really acting, I could have collapsed with weariness at any time. The tortures I had undergone had weakened me considerably. The poor food I had, had weakened me even more, and I was indeed deadly tired.

This time I did collapse, and actually fell asleep through tiredness. I felt my body being crudely lifted and swung, and tossed up. The impact as I landed on the pile of creaking dead bodies awakened me. I felt the pile sway a little and then settle down. The shock of that landing made me open my eyes; a guard was looking halfheartedly in my direction, so I opened my eyes still more as dead man’s eyes go, and he looked away, he was too used to seeing dead bodies, one more was of no interest to him.

I kept very still, very still indeed, thinking of the past again and planning for the future. I kept still in spite of other bodies being thrown up around me, on top of me. The day seemed to last years. I thought the light would never fade. But at long last it did, the first signs of night were coming, The stench about me was almost unbearable, the stench of long-dead bodies. Beneath me I could hear the rustling and squeaks of rats going about their gruesome work, eating the bodies. Every now and then the pile would sag as one of the bottom bodies collapsed under the weight of all those above. The pile would sag and sway, and I hoped that it would not topple over, as so often it did, for then the bodies would have to be piled again, and who knows— this time I might be found to be alive, or even worse, find myself at the bottom of the pile, when my plight would be hopeless.

At last the prisoners working around were marched in to their huts. The guards patrolled the top of the wall, and there was the chill of the night air. Slowly, oh, so slowly the light began to fade. One by one little yellow lights appeared in windows, in the guard-rooms. So slowly as to be almost imperceptible, night came.

For a long, long time I lay still in that stinking bed of dead bodies. Lay still watching as best I could. Then, when the guards were at the far end of their beat, I gingerly pushed aside a body from above me, and pushed away one at my side. It tumbled, and went

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over the side of the pile, and fell upon the ground with a crunch. I held my breath with dismay; I thought that surely now guards would come running, and I would be found. It was death indeed to move outside in the darkness, because searchlights would come on, and any unfortunate found by the Japanese would be bayoneted to death, or disemboweled perhaps, or hung over a slow fire, or any devilish death which the distorted Japanese ingenuity could devise, and all this would be in front of a sickened group of prisoners, to teach them that it was not policy to try to escape from the Sons of Heaven.

Nothing moved. The Japanese were too used, apparently, to the creakiness and fallings from the dead pile. I moved experimentally. The whole pile of bodies creaked and shook. I moved a foot at a time, and eventually crept over the edge of the pile, and let myself down, grabbing bodies so that I could climb down ten or twelve feet, because I was too weak to jump and risk a sprain or a broken bone.

The slight noises that I made did not attract attention. The Japanese had no idea at all that anyone would hide in such a gruesome place. Upon the ground I moved stealthily and slowly to the shadow of the trees near the wall of the prison camp. For some time I waited. Above my head the guards came together. There was a muttered talk, and the flare of a match as a cigarette was lighted. Then the guards parted, one going off up the wall, and the other down, each with a cigarette hidden in his cupped hands, each of them more or less blinded for the time being by the glare of that match in the darkness. I took advantage of that. Quietly and slowly I managed to climb over the wall. This was a camp which had been set up temporarily, and the Japanese had not got around to electrifying their fences. I climbed over, and stealthily made my way into the darkness. All that night I lay along the branch of a tree, almost in sight of the camp. I reasoned that if I had been missed, if I had been seen, the Japanese would rush by, they would not think that a prisoner would stay so close to them. The whole of the next day I stayed where I was, I was too weak, and ill, to move. Then at the end of the day, as the darkness again fell, I slithered down the trunk of the tree, and made my way on through territory which I new well.

I knew that an old, old Chinese lived nearby. I had brought much help to his wife before she died, and to his house I made my way in the darkness. I tapped gently at his door. There was an air of tenseness, an air of fright. Eventually I whispered who I was. Stealthy movements inside, and then gently and silently the door was opened a few inches, and the old face looked out. "Ah," he said, "come in quickly." He opened the door wider, and I crept in beneath his outstretched arm. He put up his shutters, and a light and gasped with horror as he saw me. My left eye was badly damaged. My nose was flattened against my face. My mouth was cut and gashed, and the ends drooped down. He heated water; and washed my hurts, and gave me food. That night and the next day I rested in his hut. He went out, and made arrangements whereby I should be conveyed to the Chinese lines. For several days I had to remain in that hut in the Japanese held territory, for several days while fever raged, and where I nearly died.

After perhaps ten days I was sufficiently recovered to be able to get up, and walk out, and make my way along a well planned route to the Chinese headquarters near Shanghai. They looked at me in horror as I went in with my squashed and battered face, and for more than a month I was in hospital while they took bone from a leg to rebuild my nose.

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Then I was sent off again to Chungking to recuperate before returning as an active medical officer to the Chinese medical forces. Chungking! I thought I would be glad to see it after all my adventures, after all that I had gone through. Chungking! And so I set off with a friend who also was going there to recuperate from illnesses caused in the war.

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## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **Prisoner of the Japanese**

WE were amazed at the difference in Chungking. This was no longer the Chungking that we knew. New buildings—new fronts to old buildings—shops of all types springing up everywhere. Chungking! The place was absolutely crowded! People had been pouring in from Shanghai, from all the coastal towns. Businessmen, with their living gone on the coast, had come far inland to Chungking, to start all over again, perhaps with a few pitiful remnants saved from the grasping Japanese. But more often starting again from nothing.

Universities had found buildings in Chungking, or had built their own temporary buildings, ramshackle sheds most of them. But here was the seat of culture of China. No matter what the buildings were like, the brains were there, some of the best brains in the whole world.

We made our way to the temple at which we had stayed previously; it was like coming home. Here, in the calm of the temple, with the incense waving in clouds above our heads, we felt that we had come to peace, we felt that the Sacred Images were gazing benignly upon us in favour of our efforts, and perhaps even a little sympathetic at the harsh treatment which we had undergone. Yes, we were home at peace, recovering from our hurts, before going out into the fierce savage world to endure fresh and worse torments. The temple bells chimed, the trumpets were sounded. It was time again for the familiar, well beloved service. We took our places with hearts full of joy at being back.

That night we were late in retiring because there was so much to discuss so much to tell, so much to hear as well, because Chungking had been having a hard time with the bombs dropping. But we were from “the great outside,” as they called it in the temple, and our throats were parched before we were allowed to roll again in our blankets and sleep in the old familiar place upon the ground near the temple precincts. At last sleep overtook us.

In the morning I had to go to the hospital at which I had previously been student, house surgeon, and then medical officer. This time I was going as a patient. It was a novel

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experience indeed to be a patient at this hospital. My nose, though, was giving trouble; it had turned septic, and so there was nothing for it but to have it opened and scraped. This was quite a painful process. We had no anesthetics. The Bulman Road had been closed, all our supplies had been stopped, There was nothing for it but to endure as pleasantly as I could, that which could not be avoided. But so soon as the operation was over I returned to the temple, because beds in Chungking hospital were very scarce. Wounded were pouring in, and only the most urgent cases, only those who could not walk at all were allowed to remain in the hospital. Day after day I made the journey down the little path along the high road, to Chungking.

At long last, after two or three weeks, the Dean of the Surgical Facility called me into his office, and said, "Well, Lobsang, my friend, we shall not have to engage thirty-two coolies for you after all. We thought we should, you know, it has been touch and go!"

Funerals in China are taken very, very seriously indeed. It was considered of the utmost importance to have the correct number of bearers according to one's social status. To me it all seemed silly; as I well knew when the spirit had left the body it did not matter at all what happened to the body. We of Tibet made no fuss about our discarded bodies; we just had them collected by the Body Breakers who broke them up and fed the bits to the birds. Not so in China. Here that would be almost akin to condemning one to eternal torment. Here one had to have a coffin borne by thirty-two coolies if it was a first class funeral. The second class funeral, though, had just half that number of bearers, sixteen of them, as if it took sixteen men to carry one coffin! The third class funeral—this was about the average—had eight coolies bearing the lacquered wooden coffin.

But the fourth class, which was just the ordinary working class, had four coolies. Of course the coffin here would be quite a light affair, quite cheap. Lower than fourth class had no coolies at all to carry. The coffins were just trundled along in any sort of conveyance. And of course there were not only coolies to be considered; there were the official mourners, those who wept and wailed, and made it their life's work to attend on the departure of the dead. Funerals? Death? It is strange how odd incidents stay in one's mind! One in particular has stayed in mine ever since. It occurred near Chungking. It may be of interest to relate it here, to give a little picture of war—and death.

It was the day of the mid-autumn festival of "The Fifteenth Day of the Eighth Month" when the autumn moon was at the full. In China this is an auspicious occasion. It is the time when families try their utmost to come together for a banquet at the ending of the day. "Moon-cakes" are eaten to celebrate the harvest moon; they are eaten as a sort of sacrifice as a sort of token that they hope the next year will be a happier one.

My friend Huang the Chinese monk was also staying at the temple. He too had been wounded and on this particular day we were walking from Chiaoting Village to Chungking. The village is a suburb perched high on the steep sides of the Yangtse. Here lived the wealthier people, those who could afford the best. Below us through occasional gaps in the trees as we walked we could see the river and the boats upon it. Nearer in the terraced gardens blue-clad men and women worked, bent over at their eternal weeding and hoeing. The morning was beautiful. It was warm and sunny, the type of day when



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everything seems bright and cheerful. Thoughts of war were far removed from our minds as we strolled along, stopping every so often to look through the trees and admire the view. Close to us in a nearby thicket a bird was singing, welcoming the day.

We walked on and breasted the hill. "Stop a minute Lobsang. I'm winded," said Huang. So we sat on a boulder in the shadow of the trees. It was pleasant there with the beautiful view across the water, with the moss covered track sweeping away down the hill, and the little autumn flowers peeping from the ground in profuse flecks of colour.

The trees, too, were beginning to turn and change shade. Above us little flecks of cloud drifted idly across the sky. In the distance approaching us we saw a crowd of people. Snatches of sound were borne to us on the light wind. "We must conceal ourselves, Lobsang. It is the funeral of old Shang, the Silk Trader. A first class funeral. I should have attended, but I said I was too ill, and I shall lose face if they see me now." Huang had risen to his feet, and I rose as well from the boulder. Together we retreated a little way into the wood, where we could see, but not be seen. There was a rocky ridge, and we lay down behind it, Huang a little way behind me so that even if I were seen he would not be. We made ourselves at ease, draping our robes around us, robes which blended well with the russet of autumn.

Slowly the funeral procession approached, the Chinese monks were gowned in yellow silk, with their rust red capes around their shoulders. The pale autumn sun shone on their freshly shaven heads, showing up the scars of the initiation ceremony; the sun gleamed on the silver bells they carried in their hands, making flashings and glintings as they were swung. The monks were singing the minor chant of the funeral service as they walked ahead of the huge Chinese lacquered coffin which was carried by thirty-two coolies.

Attendants beat gongs, and let off fireworks to scare any lurking devils, for, according to Chinese belief, demons were now ready to seize the soul of the deceased, and they had to be frightened off by fireworks and by noise. Mourners, with the white cloth of sorrow draped around their heads, walked behind. A woman, far advanced in pregnancy, and evidently a close relation, was weeping bitterly as she was helped along by others. Professional mourners wailed loudly as they shrieked the virtues of the departed to all who listened. Next came servants bearing paper money, and paper models of all the things which the deceased had in this life, and would need in the next. From where we watched, concealed by the ridge of rock, and the overgrowing bushes, we could smell the incense and the scent of the freshly crushed flowers as they were trodden underfoot by the procession. It was a very big funeral indeed. Shang, the Silk Trader, must have been one of the leading citizens, for the wealth here was fabulous.

The party came slowly by us with loud wailings, and the clattering of cymbals, and the blaring of instruments and the ringing of bells. Suddenly shadows came across the sun, and above the clamor of the funeral party we heard the drone of high-powered aero engines, a drone growing louder, and louder, and more and more ominous. Three sinister-looking Japanese planes came into view above the trees, between us and the sun. They circled around. One detached itself, and came lower, and swept right above the

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funeral procession. We were not perturbed. We thought that even the Japanese would respect the sanctity of death. Our hearts rose as the plane swept back to rejoin the other two, and together they made off. Our rejoicing was short-lived however; the planes circled, and came at us again; little black dots fell from beneath their wings, and grew larger, and larger, as the shrieking bombs fell to earth, fell directly on the funeral procession.

Before us the trees swayed and rocked, the whole earth appeared to be in turmoil, riven metal went screaming by. So close were we that we heard no explosion. Smoke and dust, and shattered cypress trees were in the air. Red lumps went swishing by, to land with sickening splats on anything in the way. For a moment all was hidden by a black and yellow pall of smoke. Then it was swept away by the wind and we were left to face the ghastly carnage.

On the ground the coffin gaped wide, and empty. The poor dead body which it had contained was flung asprawl, like a broken doll, shredded, unkempt, discarded. We picked ourselves from the ground, shaken, and half stunned by the havoc, by the violence of the explosion, and by our very close escape. I stood and picked from the tree behind me a long sliver of metal which had barely missed me as it whirled by my head. The sharp end was dripping with blood, and it was hot, so hot that I dropped it with an exclamation of pain as I looked ruefully at my scorched finger tips.

On the rended trees pieces of cloth stirred in the breeze, with bloody flesh adhering. An arm, complete with shoulder, still swayed across a forked branch some fifty feet away. It teetered, slipped, caught again for a moment on a lower branch, and then finally, sickeningly fell to the earth. From somewhere a red, distorted head, grinning frightened surprise, fell through the stripped branches of the trees, and rolled towards me, to finally stop at my feet as if it were gazing at me in awed wonder at the inhumanity of the Japanese aggressor.

It seemed a moment when even time itself stood still in horror. The air reeked with the odors of high explosive, with blood, and with riven guts. The only sounds were swish and plop, as unmentionable things fell from the sky or from the trees. We hurried to the wreckage, hoping that someone could be helped, sure that there must be some survivor of the tragedy. Here was a body, shredded and disemboweled, so mutilated, so scorched that we could not say if it was male or female; so mutilated that we could hardly say even that it was human. By it, across it, was a small boy, with his legs blown off at the thigh. He was whimpering with terror. As I knelt beside him he erupted a gout of bright blood, and coughed his life away.

Sadly we looked about, and widened our area of search. Beneath a fallen tree we found the pregnant woman. The tree had been blown across her. It had burst her stomach. From the womb her unborn baby protruded, dead. Further along was a severed hand which still tightly grasped a silver bell. We searched and searched, and found no life.

From the sky came the sound of aircraft engines. The attackers were returning to view their ghastly work. We lay back on the bloodstained ground as the Japanese plane

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circled lower, and lower, to inspect the damage, to make sure that none lived to tell the tale. It turned lazily, banking like a hawk swooping for the kill, then came back, back in straight flight, lower and lower. The harsh crackle of machine-gun fire and the whiplash of bullets along the trees.

Something tugged at the skirt of my robe and I heard a scream. I felt as if my leg had been scorched. "Poor Huang," I thought, "he's hit and he wants me." Above us the plane turned circling idly as if the pilot leaned as far as he could to view the ground below. He put his nose down and desultorily fired again and again, and circled once more. Apparently he was satisfied for he wagged his wings and went away. After a while I rose to give aid to Huang but he was many feet away, quite unhurt, still half concealed in the ground. I pulled my robe and found my left leg had a scorch mark where the bullet had ploughed its way along the flesh. Inches from me the grinning skull now had a fresh bullet hole through it, straight through one temple and out through the other side; the exit hole was huge and had blown the brains out with it.

Once again we searched in the undergrowth and among the trees, but there was no sign of life. Fifty to a hundred people, perhaps more, had been here only minutes ago to pay homage to the dead. Now they too were dead. Now they were merely red ruin and shapeless mounds. We turned helplessly. There was nothing at all for us to do, nothing to save. Time alone would cover these scars.

This then was the "Fifteenth Day of the Eighth Month" when families came together at the ending of the day, when they came together with joy in their hearts at the reunion. Here at least, by the action of the Japanese, the families had "come together" at the ending of their day. We turned to continue our way, as we left the wrecked area a bird took up its interrupted song as if nothing at all had happened.

Life in Chungking at that time was crude indeed. Many money-grabbers had come in, people who tried to exploit the misery of the poor, who tried to capitalize on war. Prices were soaring, conditions were difficult. We were glad indeed when orders came through for us to resume our duties. Casualties near the coast had been very high indeed. Medical personnel were desperately needed. So once again, we left Chungking, and made our way down to the coast where General Yo was waiting to give us our orders. Days later I was installed as medical officer in charge of the hospital, a laughable term indeed. The hospital was a collection of paddy fields in which the unfortunate patients lay on the waterlogged ground, for there was nowhere else to lie, no bed, nothing. Our equipment? Paper bandages.

Obsolete surgical apparatus, and anything else we could make, but at least we had the knowledge and the will to bring help to those so badly wounded, and of those we had a surfeit. The Japanese were winning everywhere. The casualties were ghastly.

One day the air-raids seemed to be more intense than usual. Bombs were dropping everywhere. The whole fields were ringed with bomb craters. Troops were retreating.

Then in the evening of that day a contingent of Japanese rushed upon us, menacing us with their bayonets, jabbing first one, then another, just to show that they were the

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masters. We had no resistance, we had no weapons at all, nothing with which to defend ourselves. The Japanese roughly questioned me as the one in charge, and then they went out in the fields to examine the patients. All the patients were ordered to stand up. Those who were too ill to walk and carry a load were bayoneted by the enemy then and there. The rest of us were marched off, just as we were, to a prison camp much further in the interior. We marched miles and miles each day. Patients were dropping dead by the roadside, and as they fell Japanese guards rushed to examine them for anything of value. Jaws clenched in death were pried open with a bayonet, and any gold fillings of teeth were crudely knocked out.

One day as we were marching along I saw that the guards in front had something strange on the end of their bayonets. They were waving them about. I thought it was some sort of celebration. It looked as if they had got balloons tied on the end of their rifles. Then, with laughs and shouts, guards came rushing down the line of prisoners, and we saw with a sick feeling in the stomach, that they had heads spiked to the end of their bayonets. Heads with the eyes open, the mouth open, too, the jaws dropped down. The Japanese had been taking prisoners, decapitating them and spearing the necks as a sign—again—that they were the masters.

In our hospital we had been dealing with patients of all nations. Now, as we marched along, bodies of all nationalities were by the roadside. They were all of one nationality now, the nation of the dead. The Japanese had taken everything from them. For days we marched on, getting fewer and fewer, getting tired, and tired, until those few of us who reached the new camp were stumbling along in a red haze of pain and fatigue, with the blood seeping through our rag-wrapped feet, and leaving a long red trail behind us.

At last we reached the camp, and a very crude camp it was too. Here again the questioning started. Who was I? What was I? Why was I, a lama of Tibet, fighting on behalf of the Chinese? My reply to the effect that I was not fighting, but mending broken bodies, and helping those who were ill, brought abuse and blows. "Yes," they said, "yes, mending bodies so that they can fight against us."

At last I was put to work looking after those who were trying to save them for the slave labor of the Japanese. About four months after we reached that camp there was a big inspection. Some high officials were coming to see how the prison camps were behaving, and whether there was anyone of note who could be of use to the Japanese.

We were all lined up in the early dawn, and left standing there for hours, and hours, until the late afternoon, and a sorry crowd we looked by then. Those who fell from fatigue were bayoneted and dragged away to the death pile. We straightened our lines somewhat as high-powered cars drove up with a roar, and bemedalled men jumped out. A visiting Japanese major casually walked down the lines, looking over the prisoners. He glanced at me, then looked at me more carefully. He stared at me, and said something to me which I did not understand. Then as I did not reply he struck me across the face with the scabbard of his sword. An orderly was summoned and the major said something to him. The orderly ran off to the records office, and after a very short time he came back with my record. The major snatched it from him, and read it avidly. Then he shouted

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abuse at me, and issued an order to the guards with him. Once again I was knocked down by their rifle butts. Once again my nose—so newly repair and rebuilt—was smashed and I was dragged away to the guard room. Here my hands and feet were tied behind my back, and pulled up and tied to my neck, so that every time I tried to rest my arms I nearly strangled myself. For a long time I was kicked and pummeled, and burned with cigarette ends while questions were shot at me. Then I was made to kneel, and guards jumped on my heels in the hope that that pain would compel me to answer. My arches snapped under the strain.

The questions they asked! How had I escaped? Who had I spoken to while I was away? Did I know that it was an insult to their Emperor to escape? They also demanded details of troop movements because they thought that I, as a lama from Tibet, must know a lot about Chinese dispositions. Of course I did not answer, and they kept burning me with their lighted cigarettes, and going through all the usual routine of torture. Eventually they put me on a crude sort of rack, and pulled the drum tight so that it felt as if my arms and legs were being dragged from their sockets. I fainted and each time I was revived by having a bucket of cold water thrown over me, and by being pricked with bayonet points. At last the medical officer in charge of the camp intervened. He said that if I had any more suffering I would assuredly die, and they would then not be able to get answers to their questions. They did not want to kill me, because to kill me would be to allow me to escape from their questions. I was dragged out by the neck, and thrown into a deep underground cell shaped like a bottle, made of cement. Here I was kept for days; it might have been weeks. I lost all count of time, there was no sensation of time. The cell was pitch dark. Food was thrown in every two days, and water was lowered in a tin. Often it was spilled, and I had to grovel in the dark, and scrabble with my hands to try and find it, or to try and find anything moist from the ground. My mind would have cracked under the strain, under that darkness so profound, but my training saved me. I thought again of the past.

Darkness? I thought of the hermits in Tibet, in their secure hermitages perched in lofty mountain peaks in inaccessible places among the clouds. Hermits who were immured in their cells, and stayed there for years, freeing the mind of the body, freeing the soul from the mind, so that they could realize greater spiritual freedom. I thought not of the present, but of the past, and during my reverie inevitably came back to that most wonderful experience, my visit to the Chang Tang Highlands.

We, my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, and a few companions and I, had set out from the golden roofed Potala in Lhasa in search of rare herbs. For weeks we had journeyed upwards ever upwards into the frozen North into Chang Tang Highlands, or, as some call it, Shamballah. This day we were nearing our objective. That day was indeed bitter, the bitterest of many frozen days. Ice blew at us driven by a shrieking gale. The frozen pellets struck our flapping robes, and abraded the skin from any surface which was left exposed. Here, nearly twenty-five thousand feet above the sea, the sky was a vivid purple, few patches of cloud racing across were startling white in comparison. It looked like the white horses of the Gods, taking their riders across Tibet.

We climbed on, and on, with the terrain becoming more difficult with every step. Our



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lungs rasped in our throats. We clawed a precarious foothold in the hard earth, forcing our fingers into the slightest crack in the frozen rock. At last we reached that mysterious fog belt again (see Third Eye) and made our way through it with the ground beneath our feet becoming warmer, and warmer, and the air around us becoming more and more balmy and comforting. Gradually we emerged from the fog into the lush paradise of that lovely sanctuary. Before us again was that land of a bygone age.

That night we rested in the warmth and comfort of the Hidden Land. It was wonderful to sleep on a soft bed of moss, and to breathe the sweet scent of flowers. Here in this land there were fruits which we had not tasted before, fruits which we sampled, and tried again. It was glorious too, to be able to bathe in warm water, and to loll at ease upon a golden strand.

On the following day we journeyed onward, going higher and higher, but now we were not at all troubled. We marched on through clumps of rhododendron, and passed by walnut trees, and others the names of which we did not know. We did not press ourselves unduly that day. Nightfall came upon us once again, but this time we were not cold. We were at ease, comfortable. Soon we sat beneath the trees, and lit our fire, and prepared our evening meal.

With that completed we wrapped our robes about us, and lay and talked. One by one we dropped off to sleep. Again on the next day we continued our march, but we had only covered two or three miles when suddenly, unexpectedly, we came to an open clearing, a spot where the trees ended, and before us—we stopped almost paralyzed with amazement, shaking with the knowledge that we had come upon something completely beyond our understanding. We looked. The clearing before us was a vast one.

There was a plain before us, more than five miles across. At its distant side there was an immense sheet of ice extending upwards, like a sheet of glass reaching toward the heavens, as if indeed it were a window on heaven, a window on the past. For at the other side of that sheet of ice we could see, as if through the purest of water, a city, intact; a strange city, the like of which we had never see even in the books of pictures which we had at the Potala.

Projecting from the glacier were buildings. Most of them were in a good state of preservation, because the ice had been thawed out gently in the warm air of the hidden valley, thawed out so gently, so gradually that not a stone or part of a structure had been damaged. Some of them, indeed, were quite intact, preserved throughout countless centuries by the wonderful pure dry air of Tibet. Some of those buildings in fact, could have been erected perhaps a week before, they looked so new.

My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, broke our awed silence, saying, "My brothers, half a million years ago this was the home of the Gods. Half a million years ago this was a pleasant seaside resort in which lived scientists of a different race and type. They came from another place together, and I will tell you of their history one day; but through their experiments they brought calamity upon the earth, and they fled the scene of their disaster leaving the ordinary people of the earth behind. They caused calamity, and through their experiments the sea rose up and froze, and here before us we see a city

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preserved in the eternal ice from that time, a city which was inundated as the land rose and the water rose with it, inundated and frozen.”

We listened in fascinated silence as my Guide continued with his talk, telling us of the past, telling us of the ancient records far beneath the Po-tala, records engraved upon sheets of gold, just as now in the Western world records are preserved for posterity in what they called “time capsules.”

Moved by a common impulse we rose to our feet, and then walked to explore the buildings within our reach. The closer we got, the more dumbfounded we became. It was so very very strange. For a moment we could not understand the sensation that we felt. We imagined that we had suddenly become dwarfs. Then the solution hit us. The buildings were immense, as if they were built for a race twice as tall as we. Yes, that was it. Those people, those super-people, were twice as tall as ordinary people of earth. We entered some of the buildings, and looked about. One in particular seemed to be a laboratory of some kind, and there were many strange devices, and many of them still worked.

A gushing current of ice cold water jerked me back to reality with stunning suddenness, jerked me back to the misery and pain of my existence in the stone oubliette. The Japanese had decided that I had been in there long enough, and I had not been “softened up” enough. The easiest way to get me out, they thought, was to fill the oubliette with water, so that I would float to the surface as a cork floats to the surface of a filled bottle. As I reached the top, reached the narrow neck of the cell, rough hands grabbed me and dragged me out. I was marched off to another cell, this time to one above ground, and flung in.

The next day I was put to work, again treating the sick. Later that week there was another inspection by the high Japanese officials. There was much rushing about. The inspection was being carried out without any previous warning, and the guards were in a panic. I found myself at the time quite near the main gate of the prison. No one was taking any notice of me, so I took the opportunity to keep walking, not too fast, as I did not want to attract attention but not too slow, either, it was not healthy to linger there!

I kept walking, and walking, as if I had a perfect right to be out. One guard called to me, and I turned toward him and raised my hand, as if in salute. For some reason he just waved back, and turned about his ordinary work. I continued with my walk. When I was out of sight of the prison, hidden by the bushes, I ran as fast as my weakened frame would enable me.

A few miles further on, I recollected, was a house owned by Western people whom I knew. I had, in fact, been able to do them some service in the past. So, cautiously, by nightfall, I made my way to their home. They took me in with warm exclamations of sympathy. They bandaged my many hurts, and gave me a meal, and put me to bed, promising that they would do everything they could to get me through the Japanese lines. I fell asleep, soothed by the thought that once again I was in the hands of friends.

Rough shouts and blows soon brought me back to reality, soon jerked me back from sleep. Japanese guards were standing over me, dragging me out of the bed, prodding

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me again with their bayonets. My hosts, after all their protestations of sympathy, had waited until I was asleep, and had then notified the Japanese guards that they had an escaped prisoner. The Japanese guards had lost no time in coming to collect me. Before I was taken away I managed to ask the Western people why they had so treacherously betrayed me.

Their illuminating answer was, "You are not one of us. We have to look after our own people. If we kept you we should antagonize the Japanese, and endanger our work."

Back in that prison camp I was treated very badly indeed. For hours I was strung up from the branches of a tree, suspended by my two thumbs tied together. Then there was a sort of mock trial in front of the commandant of the camp. He was told, "This man is a persistent escaper. He is causing us too much work." So he passed sentence on me. I was knocked down, and laid out on the ground.

Then blocks were put beneath my legs so that my legs were supported clear of the ground. Two Japanese guards stood on each leg, and bounced, so that the bone snapped. I fainted with the agony of it. When I recovered consciousness I was back in the cold, dank, cell, with the rats swarming around me.

It was death not to attend the predawn roll-call, and I knew it. A fellow prisoner brought me some bamboos, and tied splints to each leg to support the broken bones. I used two other bamboos as crutches, and I had a third which I used as a sort of tripod leg in order to balance. With that I managed to attend the roll-call, and so saved myself from death by hanging, or bayoneting, or disemboweling, any other of the usual forms in which the Japanese specialized.

As soon as my legs were healed and the bones knit together—although not very well, as I had set them myself—the commandant sent for me, and told me that I was going to be moved to a camp yet further into the interior, where I was to be medical officer of this camp for women. So, once again, I was on the move. This time there was a convoy of lorries going to the camp and I was the only prisoner being moved there. So I was just ordered aboard and kept chained like a dog near the tail board of one lorry.

Eventually, several days later, we arrived at this camp where I was taken off and led to the commandant. Here we had no medical equipment of any kind, and no drugs. We made what we could from old tins sharpened on stones, from fire-hardened bamboo, and from threads unraveled from tattered clothing. Some of the women had no clothing at all, or were very ragged. Operations were performed on conscious patients, and torn bodies were stitched with boiled cotton. Often by night the Japanese would come along and order out all women to inspect them.

Any which they found to their liking they took off to the officers' quarters to entertain the permanent officers and any visitors. In the morning the women would be returned looking shamefaced, and ill, and I as the prisoner-doctor would have to try to patch up their maltreated bodies.

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## **CHAPTER TEN**

### **How to Breathe**

The Japanese guards were in a bad mood again. Officers and men strode about the place scowling, striking at any unfortunate who happened to meet their gaze. We were glum indeed as we contemplated another day of terror, another day of food shortage and useless tasks. Hours before there had been a swirl of dust as a large captured American car pulled up with a jerk that would have torn the hearts of its makers. There were shouts and yells, and the running men buttoned their shabby uniforms. Guards rushed by grabbing any bit of equipment that they could lay their hands on to make some sort of a show to indicate that they were efficient and doing their work.

It was a surprise visit from one of the generals commanding the area. Quite definitely it was a surprise. No one had even contemplated another inspection because there had been one only two days before. It seemed that sometimes in the camp the Japanese would call an inspection just to look over the women and to have parties. They would line up the women and examine them, and pick out ones that they wanted, and these would be marched off under armed guard, and a little later we would hear anguished shrieks and cries of terror or pain. This time, though, it was the real thing, a genuine inspection, an inspection by a high-ranking general straight from Japan, who had come to see what was really happening in the camps. We found out later that the Japanese had been having a few setbacks, and it occurred to someone that if there were too many atrocities there may be retributions for a few officials later.

At last the guards were in a more or less straight line ready for inspection. There was much shuffling and clouds of dust were rising from the feet of the frightened men. We watched from behind our wire, interested, because this time the guards were being inspected and not the prisoners. For a long time the men were being lined up, and then at last there was an impression of tenseness, an impression that something was going to happen. As we watched we saw movements at the Guard House, men presenting arms. Then the general came out, swaggering along, and strutted down the line of men with his long samurai sword trailing behind him. His face was distorted with rage at having been kept waiting, and his aides were all looking nervous and ill at ease. Slowly he went down

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the lines of men, picking out one here or there with whom to find fault. Nothing seemed to be light that day. Things were looking blacker and blacker.

The little "Sons of Heaven" were indeed a sorry-looking crew. In the hurry they picked up any equipment available no matter how unsuitable. They had lost their heads completely. They just HAD to show that they were doing something instead of lounging about wasting time. The general moved on, and then came to a sudden halt with a screech of rage. One man had a prisoner's drain-clearing pole with a tin on the end instead of his rifle. Some time before one of the prisoners had been using that pole and that tin to clear out our camp drains. The general looked at the man and looked at the pole, and raised his head higher to look at the can at the end of the pole. He became more and more furious. He became quite inarticulate for a moment with rage. Already he had raised himself to his toes and given hard right and left face slaps to a number of men who incurred his displeasure. Now at the sight of this drain-clearing pole he was completely overcome. Eventually he regained the power of movement, he jumped with rage then looked about him for something with which to strike the man. A thought occurred to him. He looked down, unhooked his sword and scabbard, and brought that ornamental weapon down on the unfortunate guard's head with stunning force. The poor wretch buckled at the knees, and just dropped flat on the ground. Blood poured out of his nostrils, and out of his ears. The general contemptuously kicked him and motioned to the guards. The unfortunate man was picked up by his feet, and trailed along the ground, his head bumping and bumping. At last he disappeared from our sight, and he was not seen again in our camp.

Nothing at all seemed to go right with that inspection. The general and his accompanying officers found fault everywhere. They were turning a peculiar purple with rage. They carried out one inspection, and then they carried out another. We had never seen anything like it. But there was one bright spot from our point of view. The general was so irate with the guards that he forgot to inspect the prisoners. At last the high-ranking officers disappeared again into the Guard Room from whence came shouts of rage, and a shot or two. Then they came out again, climbed into their cars, and disappeared from our sight. The guards were given the order to fall out, and they dispersed still shaking with fright.

So—the Japanese guards were in a very bad mood. They had just beaten up a Dutch woman because she was large, and towered over them, and so made them feel inferior. As they said, she was taller than they, and that was an insult to their Emperor! She was knocked down with the butt of a rifle and kicked and prodded, so that she was injured internally and bleeding. For another hour or two, until sunset, she would have to remain on the ground outside the Guard Room at the main entrance. She would have to remain kneeling on the ground, kneeling with the blood pouring out of her. No one, no matter how ill, could be moved before the guards gave permission. If a prisoner died, well, that was one less to feed. Certainly the guards did not mind in the least, and die she did. Just before sunset she toppled over. No one could go to her aid. At last a guard motioned to two prisoners to come and drag away the body. They brought her to me, but it was useless. She was dead. She had bled to death.



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It was difficult indeed treating patients under camp conditions. We lacked all supplies. Now our bandages were finished. They had been washed and washed, and used until they had rotted away, until the last few threads had failed to hang together. We could not make any more from clothing because no one had any to spare. Some of the prisoners indeed, had no clothing at all. The matter was becoming quite acute. We had so many sores, so many wounds, and no method of treating them. In Tibet I had studied her and on one of our work expeditions beyond the confines of the camp I had found a local plant that seemed quite familiar to me. It was wide with thick leaves, and it was a very useful astringent, a thing that we desperately needed.

The problem was to get a supply of these leaves into camp. A group of us talked it over, long into the night. Eventually it was decided that working parties must collect them somehow, and hide them in some unspecified manner when they were returning to camp. We discussed how they could be hidden. At last some really wise person suggested that as there was a working party collecting large bamboos, leaves could be hidden in the stems.

Women, or "girls" as they called themselves no matter their age, collected large quantities of fleshy leaves. I was delighted to see them. It was like greeting old friends. We spread all the leaves on the ground behind the huts. The Japanese guards looked on not at all worried about what we were doing. They thought that we had gone off our heads, or something, but we had to spread the leaves so that they could be sorted carefully, because all kinds had been brought in by the women who were not used to picking one particular plant, and only the one variety could be used.

We picked over the leaves, and sorted out the one type that we wanted. The rest—well, we had to get rid of those as well, and we spread them upon the pile of dead at the edge of our compound.

The leaves left were sorted into large and small, and carefully cleaned from the dirt on them. We had no water which to wash them, because water was a very scarce commodity. Now we had to find a suitable container in which to mash the leaves. The camp rice bowl was the largest thing available, so we took that and put the carefully picked leaves in it. The next worry was finding a suitable stone, one with sharp points on it so that the leaves could be macerated, and made into a fine pulp. Eventually we were able to find a stone such as we required. It was a stone requiring two hands to lift it. The women who were helping me took it in turns to stir and pound leaves until they were reduced to a sticky green dough.

Our next problem was to find something to absorb blood and pus while the astringent was acting, and something to hold the mass together. Bamboo is a plant of many uses; we decided to put that plant to yet another use. From old canes and waste wood material we scraped a pith, and dried it over a fire in tins. When quite dry it became as fine as flour, and more absorbent than cotton wool. Half bamboo pith and half mashed leaves made a highly satisfactory mixture. Unfortunately it was friable and fell to pieces at a touch.

The construction of a base on which to lay the compound was not easy. We had to

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shred the outer fibres off the young green bamboo shoots, and tease them apart carefully so that we obtained the longest possible threads. These we laid on a thoroughly scrubbed metal sheet, which normally protected the floor from the fire. We laid the fibres on lengthwise and crisscross, as if we were weaving, as if we were making a long, narrow carpet. Eventually, after much toil, we had an untidy looking net about eight feet long and two feet wide.

With a rolling pin made of large diameter bamboo we forced the leaf and pith mixture into the network, pushing it in so that all the strands of the bamboo were converted, till we had a fairly even filling of our mashed mixture. Then we turned it over and did the same with the other side. When we finished we had a pale green dressing with which to staunch the flow of blood and promote healing. It had been something like papermaking, and the finished result was similar to thick green cardboard, pliable, not easily bent, indeed not easily cut with the crude implement which we had at our disposal. But eventually we did manage to cut the material into strips about four inches wide, and then we peeled them from the metal plate to which they had been adhering. In their present state they would keep and remain flexible for many weeks. We found them a blessing indeed.

One day a woman who had been working in the Japanese canteen pretended that she was ill. She came to me in a state of great excitement. She had been cleaning out a storeroom containing much equipment captured from the Americans. Somehow she had knocked over a tin from which the label had fallen, and some red-brown crystals had poured out. Idly she had poked her fingers into them stirring them round, wondering what they were. Later, on putting her hands into water to continue scrubbing, she had found ginger-brown stains on her hands. Was she poisoned?

Was it a trap of the Japanese? She had decided that she had better come to me in a hurry. I looked at her hands, I sniffed them, and then if I had been emotional I should have jumped for joy. It was obvious to me what caused the stains. Permanganate of potash crystals, just the thing we needed for our many tropical ulcer cases. I said, "Nina, you get that tin out somehow. Fix the lid on and put the tin in a bucket, but get it here, and keep it dry."

She returned to the canteen absolutely bubbling over with joy to think that she had been responsible for discovering something which would alleviate a little of the suffering. Later in the day she returned and produced a tin of crystals, and a few days after she produced another, and yet another tin.

We blessed the Americans that day. We even blessed the Japanese for capturing the American supplies! Tropical ulcers are dreadful things. Lack of adequate food and neglect are the main causes. It may be that the inability to have a good wash contributes toward it. First there is a slight itch, and the victim absentmindedly scratches. Then a small pimple like a red pinhead appears, and it is scratched or dug with exasperation. Infection from the finger nails gets into the abrasion. Gradually the whole area becomes red, an angry red. Little yellow nodules form beneath the skin and cause further irritation, and more severe scratching. The ulcer would grow outwards, and outwards. Pus, evil smelling stuff, would appear. In course of time the body resources would become

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further depleted, and the health would deteriorate even more.

Down and down would grow the ulcer, eating through the flesh, through the cartilage, and eventually through the bone killing the marrow and the tissue. If nothing was done the patient would eventually die.

But something had to be done. The ulcer, the source of the infection, had to be removed somehow and as quickly as possible. Lacking all medical equipment we had to resort to truly desperate measures. The ulcer had to be removed to save the life of the patient, the whole thing had to be lifted out. So—there was only one thing for it. We made a scoop from a tin, and carefully sharpened the edge. Then sterilized the tin the best way we could over the flame of our fire. Fellow prisoners held the affected limb of the sufferer, and with the sharpened tin I would scoop out the dead flesh and the pus, until only clean healthy tissue was left. We had to be quite sure that no spot of infection was overlooked and left behind, or the ulcer would grow again like a malignant weed. With the tissue cleansed of the ulcer's ravages the large cavity would be filled with the herbal paste, and with infinite care the patient would be nursed back to health, health as measured by our camp standard! And that standard would be almost death anywhere else. This permanganate of potash would help the healing process by assisting in keeping down pus and other sources of infection. We treated it like gold dust.

So our treatment sounds brutal? It was! But our "brutal" methods saved many a life, and many a limb too. Without such treatment the ulcer would grow, and grow, poisoning the system, so that eventually the arm or leg had to be amputated (without anesthetics!) to save the life of the sufferer. Health was indeed a problem in our camp.

The Japanese gave us no assistance of any kind, so in the end I drew upon my knowledge of breathing, and taught many of those in the camp special breathing for special purposes because by breathing correctly, breathing to certain rhythms, one can do much to improve the health both mentally and physically.

My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, taught me the science of breathing after he had caught me one day panting up a hill almost collapsing with exhaustion. "Lobsang, Lobsang," he said, "what have you been doing to yourself in that horrible state?"

"Honourable Master " I replied gaspingly, "I have been trying to walk up the hill on stilts." He looked at me sadly, and shook his head with an air of sad resignation. He sighed and motioned for me to sit down. For a time there was silence between us—silence, that is, except for the rasping of my breath as I strove to get back to normalcy.

I had been walking about down near the Linghor Road on stilts, showing off to the pilgrims—showing off by boasting how the monks of Chakpori could walk better, and further, and faster on stilts than anyone else in Lhasa. To prove the matter even more conclusively I had turned and run on stilts up the hill. As soon as I had managed to turn the first bend and was out of sight of the pilgrims I had fallen off with sheer exhaustion, and just after my Guide had come along and seen me in that sorry plight.

"Lobsang, it is indeed time that you learned some more. There has been enough play, enough sport. Now, as you have so clearly demonstrated, you are in need of in-

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struction on the science of correct breathing. Come with me. We will see what we can do to remedy that state of affairs."

He rose to his feet, and led the way up the hill. I rose reluctantly, picked up my stilts which had fallen askew, and followed him. He strode on easily, seeming to glide. There was no effort in his movement at all, and I, many years younger, struggled on after him, panting away like a dog on a hot summer's day.

At the top of the hill we turned into the enclosure of our lamasery, and I followed my Guide to his room. Inside we seated ourselves on the floor in the usual way, and the lama rang for the inevitable tea without which no Tibetan can carry on a serious discussion! We kept silence while the serving monks came in with tea and tsampa, and then as they left the lama poured out the tea, and gave me my first instruction on the art of breathing, instruction which was to be invaluable to me in this prison camp.

"You are puffing and panting away like an old man, Lobsang," he said. "I will soon teach you to overcome that, because no one should work so hard at what is an ordinary, natural, everyday occurrence. Too many people neglect breathing. They think you just take in a load of air, and expel that load of air, and take in another."

"But, Honourable Master," I replied, "I have been able to breathe quite nicely for nine years or more. How else can I breathe but the way in which I have always managed?"

"Lobsang, you must remember that breath is indeed the source of life. You can walk, and you can run, but without breath you can do neither. You must learn a new system, and first of all you must take a standard of time in which to breathe, because until you know this standard of time there is no way in which you can apportion the various ratios of time to your breathing, and we breathe at different rates for different purposes."

He took my left wrist and pointed out a spot saying "Take your heart, your pulse. Your pulse goes in the rhythm of one, two, three, four, five, six. Put your finger on your pulse yourself, and feel, and then you will understand what I am talking about." I did so; I put a finger on my left wrist and felt my pulse rate as he said, one, two, three, four, five, six. I looked up at my Guide as he continued, "If you think about it you will find that you breathe in air for as long as your heart takes to beat six times. But that is not good enough. You will have to be able to vary that breathing quite a lot, and we will deal with that in a few moments." He paused and looked at me and then said, "Do you know, Lobsang, you boys—I have been watching you at play—get yourselves really exhausted because you do not know the first thing about breathing. You think that as long as you take in air and let out air that is all that matters. You could not be more incorrect. There are four main methods of breathing, so let us examine them and see what they have to offer us, see what they are. The first method is a very poor one indeed. It is known as top breathing, because in this system only the upper part of the chest and lungs is used, and that as you should know is the smallest part of your breath cavity, so when you do this top breathing you get very little air into your lungs but you get a lot of stale air in the deepest recesses. You see you make only the top of your chest move. The bottom part of your chest and your abdomen are stationary, and that is a very bad thing indeed. Forget about top breath-

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ing Lobsang, because it is quite useless. It is the worst form of breathing one can do, and we must turn to others.”

He paused, and turned to face me, saying, “Look, this is top breathing. Look at the strained position I have to adopt. But that, as you will find later, is the type of breathing done by most Westerners, by most people outside Tibet and India. It causes them to think in a woolly manner, and to be mentally lethargic.”

I looked at him in open-mouthed amazement. I certainly did not imagine that breathing was such a difficult affair. I thought that I had always managed reasonably well, and now I was learning that I was wrong.

“Lobsang, you are not paying much attention to me. Now let us deal with the second system of breathing. This is known as middle breathing. It is not a very good form either. There is no point in dealing with it more fully because I do not want you to use it, but when you get to the West, you will hear people refer to it as rib breathing, or breathing in which the diaphragm is kept stationary. The third system of breathing is low breathing, and while it is possibly a little better than the other two systems it still is not correct. Some people call this low breathing abdominal breathing. In this system the lungs do not get completely filled with air. The air in the lungs is not completely replaced, and so again there is staleness, bad breath, and illness. So do nothing at all about these systems of breathing, but do as I do, do as other lamas here do, the Complete Breath, and here is how you should do it.”

“Ah!” I thought, “now we are getting down to it, now I am going to learn something, now why did he tell me all that other stuff, and then say I mustn’t do it?”

“Because, Lobsang,” my Guide said—obviously having read my thoughts—“because you should know faults as well as virtues. Since you have been here at Chakpori,” said my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, “you have undoubtedly noticed that we stress and stress again the importance of keeping one’s mouth shut. That is not merely so that we can make no false statements, it so that one can breathe only through the nostrils. If you breathe through the mouth you lose the advantage of air filters in the nostrils, and of the temperature control mechanism which the human body has. And again, if you persist in breathing through the mouth the nostrils eventually become stopped up, and so one gets catarrh and a stuffy head, and a whole host of other complaints.”

I guiltily became aware that I was watching my Guide with open-mouthed amazement. Now I closed my mouth with such a snap that his eyes twinkled with amusement, but he said nothing about that; instead he continued, “Nostrils really are very important things, and they must be kept clean. If ever your nostrils become unclean, sniff a little water up them, and let it run down inside the mouth so that you can expel it through the mouth. But whatever you do, do not breathe through the mouth, but only through the nostrils. It might help, by the way, if you use warm water. Cold water may make you sneeze.”

He turned, and touched the bell at his side. A servant entered and refilled the tea jug and brought fresh tsampa. He bowed, and left us. After a few moments the Lama Mingyar



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Dondup resumed his discourse to me. "Now, Lobsang, we will deal with the true method of breathing, the method which has enabled certain of the lamas of Tibet to prolong their life to a truly remarkable span. Let us deal with Complete Breathing. As the name implies it embodies the other three systems, low breathing, middle breathing, and top breathing, so the lungs are truly filled with air, and the blood is therefore purified and filled with life force. This is a very easy system of breathing. You have to sit, or stand, in a reasonably comfortable position and breathe through the nostrils. I saw you just a few moments ago, Lobsang, crouched over, absolutely slouching, and you just cannot breathe properly when you are slouched over. You must keep your spine upright. That is the whole secret of correct breathing." He looked at me, and sighed, but the twinkle in the corners of his eyes belied the depth of the sigh! Then he got up, and walked across to me, put his hands beneath my elbows and lifted me up so that I was sitting quite upright.

"Now Lobsang, that's how you must sit, like that, with your spine upright, with your abdomen under control, with your arms at your sides. Now sit like that. Expand your chest, force your ribs outwards, and then push down your diaphragm so that the lower abdomen protrudes also. In that way you will have a complete breath. There is nothing magical about it, you know, Lobsang. It is just ordinary common-sense breathing. You have to get as much air in you as you can, and then you have to get all the air out again and replace it. For the moment you may feel that this is involved or intricate you may feel that it is too difficult, not worth the effort, but it is worth the effort. You feel that it is not because you are lethargic, because you have got into a somewhat slovenly way of breathing of late, and you have to have breath discipline."

I breathed as directed, and to my considerable astonishment I found that it was easier. I found that my head swam a little for the first few seconds, and then it was easier still. I could see colours more clearly, and even in the few minutes I felt better.

"I am going to give you some breathing exercises every day, Lobsang, and I am going to ask you to keep on at it. It is worthwhile. You will have no more trouble with getting out of breath. That little jaunt up the hill distressed you, but I who am many times your age can come up without difficulty." He sat back, and watched me while I breathed in the way he had instructed. Certainly I could even now at this early stage appreciate the wisdom of what he was saying. He settled himself again and continued: "The only purpose of breathing no matter what system one adopts, is to take in as much air as possible, and to distribute it throughout the body in a different form, in a form which we call prana. That is the life force itself. That prana is the force which activates man, which activates everything that lives, plants, animals, man, even the fishes have to extract oxygen from water and convert it to prana. However, we are dealing with your breathing, Lobsang. Inhale slowly. Retain that breath for a few seconds. Then exhale quite slowly. You will find that there are various ratios of inhaling, holding, exhaling, which accomplish various effects such as cleansing, vitalizing, etc. Perhaps the most important general form of breathing is what we call the cleansing breath. We will go into this now, because from now on I want you to do it at the beginning and ending of every day, and at the beginning and ending of every particular exercise."

I had been following very carefully. I knew well the power that these high lamas had,

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how they could glide across the earth faster than a man could gallop on a horse, and how they could arrive at their destination untroubled, serene, controlled, and I determined that long before I too was a lama—for at this stage I was just an acolyte—I would master the science of breathing.

My Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup continued, “Now, Lobsang, for this cleansing breath. Inhale completely, three complete breaths. No, not shallow little things like that. Deep breaths, really deep ones, the deepest that you can manage, fill your lungs, draw yourself up and let yourself become full of air. That is right,” he said. “Now with the third breath retain that air for some four seconds, screw up your lips as if you were going to whistle, but do not puff out the cheeks. Blow a little air through the opening in your lips with all the vigor that you can. Blow it out hard, let it go free. Then stop for a second, retaining the air which is left. Blow out a little more, still with all the vigor you can muster. Stop for another second, and then blow out the remainder so that there is not a puff of air left inside your lungs. Blow it out as hard as you can. Remember you **MUST** exhale in this case with very considerable vigor through the opening in your lips. Now, do you not find that this is remarkably refreshing?” To my surprise I had to agree. It had seemed to me a bit stupid just puffing out and blowing out but now that I had tried it a few times I really found that I was tingling with energy feeling perhaps better than I had ever felt before. So I puffed, and I puffed, and I expanded myself, and I blew my cheeks out. Then suddenly I felt my head swimming. It seemed to me that I was getting lighter, and lighter.

Through the haze I heard my Guide, “Lobsang, Lobsang, stop! You must not breathe like that. Breathe as I tell you. Do not experiment, for to do so is dangerous. Now you have got yourself intoxicated through breathing incorrectly, by breathing too quickly. Exercise only as I am telling you to exercise, for I have the experience. Later you can experiment on your own. But, Lobsang, always caution those whom you are teaching to be careful to follow the exercises and not to experiment. Tell them never to experiment with different ratios of breathing unless they have a competent teacher with them, for to experiment with breathing is dangerous indeed. To follow the set exercise is safe, it is healthy, and no harm at all can fall to those who breathe as instructed.”

The lama stood up, and said, “Now, Lobsang, it will be a good idea if we increase your nervous force. Stand erect as I am standing now. Inhale as much as you can, then when you think that your lungs are full force in yet a little more breath. Slowly exhale. Slowly. Refill your lungs completely, and retain that breath. Extend your arms straight in front of you, not using any effort, you know, just to keep your arms in front of you with just enough strength to keep them horizontal, but use as little effort as you can. Now, look, watch me. Draw your hands back toward the shoulder, gradually contracting the muscles and making them tight so that by the time your hands can touch your shoulders the muscles will be quite taut, and the fists clenched. Watch me, see how I am clenching mine. Clench your hands so tightly that they tremble with the effort. Still keeping the muscles taut push the fists slowly out, then draw them back rapidly several times, perhaps half a dozen times. Exhale vigorously, really vigorously as I told you before, with the mouth, with the lips pursed up, and with just a hole through which you blow the breath as strongly as you can. After you have done that a few times finish by practicing the cleansing breath once

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again.”

I tried it, and I found it as before of great benefit to me. Besides it was fun, and I was always ready for fun! My Guide broke in on my thoughts.

“Lobsang, I want to emphasize, and emphasize again, that the speed of the drawing back of the fists and then tension of the muscles determines how much benefit you can get from this. Naturally you will have made quite sure that your lungs are absolutely full before doing this exercise. This, by the way, is a truly invaluable exercise, and will help you enormously during later years.”

He sat down and watched me go through that system, gently correcting my faults, praising me when I did it well, and when he was satisfied he made me go through all the exercises again to be quite sure that I could do it without further instruction. Eventually he motioned for me to sit beside him while he told me how the Tibetan system of breathing was formed after deciphering the old record deep down in the caverns beneath the Po-tala.

Later in my studies I was taught various things about breath, for we of Tibet do not cure only by herbs, but we also cure through the patient's breathing. Breathing is indeed the source of life, and it may be of interest to give a few notes here which may enable those who have some ailment, perhaps of long standing, to banish or to alleviate their suffering. It can be done through correct breathing you know, but do remember—breathe only as advised in these pages, for to experiment is dangerous unless there is a competent teacher at hand. To experiment blindly is folly indeed.

Disorders of the stomach, the liver, and the blood, can be overcome by what we term the “retained breath.” There is nothing magical in this, mind, except in the result, and the result can appear to be quite magical, quite without parallel. But—at first you must stand erect, or if you are in bed, lie straight. Let us assume, though, that you are out of bed and can stand erect. Stand with your heels together, with your shoulders back and your chest out. Your lower abdomen will be tightly controlled. Inhale completely, take in as much air as you can, and keep it in until you feel a slight—very slight throbbing in your temples to the left and to the right. As soon as you feel that, exhale vigorously through the open mouth, REALLY vigorously, you know, not just letting it drift out, but blowing it out through the mouth with all the force at your command. Then you must do the cleansing breath. There is no point in going into that again because I have told you about that as my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, told me. I will just reiterate that the cleansing breath is absolutely invaluable to enable you to improve your health.

Before we can do anything about breathing we must have a rhythm, a unit of time which represents a normal inhalation. I have already mentioned it as it was taught to me, but perhaps repetition in this case will be a useful thing as it will help to fix it permanently in one's mind. The heart beat of the person is the proper rhythmic standard for that particular individual's breathing. Hardly anyone has the same standard of course, but that does not matter. You can find your normal breathing rhythm by placing your finger on your pulse and counting. Put your right-hand fingers on your left wrist and feel about for the pulse. Let us assume that it is an average of one, two, three, four, five, six.

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Get that rhythm firmly fixed in your subconscious so that you know it unconsciously, subconsciously, so that you do not have to think about it. It does not matter—to repeat—what your rhythm is as long as you know it, as long as your subconscious knows it, but we are imagining that your rhythm is the average one in which the air intake lasts for six beats of your heart. This is just the ordinary workaday routine. We are going to alter that breathing rate quite a lot for various purposes.

There is nothing difficult in it. It is a very easy thing indeed which can lead to spectacular results in improved health. All acolytes of the higher grade in Tibet were taught breathing. We had certain exercises which we had to do before studying anything else, and this was the preliminary procedure in all cases. Would YOU like to try it? Then first of all sit erect, you can stand if you like, but there is no point in standing if you can sit.

Inhale slowly the complete breathing system. That is, chest and abdomen while counting six pulse units. That is quite easy, you know. You only have to keep a finger on the pulse in your wrist and let your heart pump out once, twice, three, four, five, six times. When you have got the breath in after your six pulse units, retain it while your heart beats three times. After that exhale through the nostrils for six heart beats. That is, for the same time as that in which you inhaled. Now that you have exhaled keep your lungs empty for three pulse units, and then start all over again.

Repeat this as many times as you like but—do not tire yourself. As soon as you feel any tiredness, stop. You should never tire yourself with exercises because if you do you defeat the whole object of those exercises. They are to tone one up and make one feel fit, not to run one down or to make one tired.

We always started with the cleansing breath exercise and that cannot be done too often. It is completely harmless and is most beneficial. It rids the lungs of stale air, rids them of impurities, and in Tibet there is no T.B.! So you can do the cleansing breath exercises whenever you feel like it, and you will get the greatest benefit from it.

One extremely good method of acquiring mental control is by sitting erect, and inhaling one complete breath. Then inhale one cleansing breath. After that inhale in the rate of one, four, two. That is (let us have seconds for a change!) inhale for five seconds, then hold your breath for four times five seconds, that is, twenty seconds. When you have done that breathe out for ten seconds. You can cure yourself of a lot of pain by breathing properly, and this is a very good method; if you have some pain either lie down, or sit erect, it does not matter which. Then breathe rhythmically, keeping the thought in your mind that with each breath the pain is disappearing, with each exhalation the pain is being pushed out. Imagine that every time you breathe in you are breathing in the life force which is displacing the pain, Imagine that every time you breathe out you are pushing out the pain. Put your hand over the affected part, and imagine that with your hand with every breath you are wiping the cause of pain away.

Do this for seven complete breaths. Then try the cleansing breath, and after that rest for a few seconds, breathing slowly and normally. You will probably find that the pain has either completely gone, or has so much lessened that it does not bother you. But if for any reason you still have the pain, repeat the same thing, try the same thing once, or

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twice more until eventually relief comes. You will of course quite understand that if it is an unexpected pain, and if it recurs, you will have to ask your doctor about it because pain is nature's warning that something is wrong, and while it is perfectly correct and permissible to lessen pain when one is aware of it, it is still essential that one does something to find out what caused the pain, and to cure the cause. Pain should never be left untended.

If you are feeling tired, or if there has been a sudden demand on your energies, here is the quickest way to recuperate. Once again it doesn't matter if you are standing or sitting, but keep your feet close together, toes and heels touching. Then clasp your hands together so that your fingers of each hand interlock, and so that your hands and feet each form a sort of closed circle. Breathe rhythmically for a few times, rather deep breaths, and slow in the exhaling. Then pause for three pulse units, and next do the cleansing breath. You will find that your tiredness has gone.

Many people are very, very nervous indeed when going for an interview. They get clammy palms and perhaps shaky knees. There is no need for anyone to be like that because it is so easy to overcome, and this is a method of doing it while you are, perhaps in the waiting room, possibly at the dentist! Take a really deep breath, breathing through your nostrils of course, and hold that breath for ten seconds. Then exhale slowly with the breath under full control all the time. Allow yourself to take two or three ordinary breaths, and then again inhale deeply taking ten seconds to fill your lungs. Hold the breath again, and exhale slowly, again taking ten seconds. Do this three times, as you can without anyone noticing, and you will find that you are absolutely reassured. The pounding of your heart will have stopped and you will feel much strengthened in confidence. When you leave that waiting room and go to your place of interview you will find that you are in control of yourself. If you feel a flutter or two of nervousness, then—take a deep breath and hold it for a second or so, as you can easily do while the other man is talking. This will reinforce your flagging confidence. All Tibetans use systems such as this. We also used breath control when lifting, because the easiest way to lift anything, it may be furniture, or lifting a heavy bundle, the easiest way is to take a really deep breath and hold it while you lift. When the actual act of lifting is over, then you can let out your breath slowly and continue to breathe in the normal way. Lifting while you hold a deep breath is easy. It is worth trying for your self. It is worth trying to lift something fairly heavy with your lungs full of air and see the difference.

Anger, too, is controlled by that deep breathing, and by holding the breath and exhaling slowly. If for any reason you feel really angry—justly or otherwise!—take a deep breath. Hold it for a few seconds, and then expel that breath quite slowly. You will find that your emotion is under control, and you are master (or mistress) of the situation. It is very harmful to give way to anger and irritation, because that can lead to gastric ulcers. So—remember this breathing exercise of taking a deep breath, retaining it, and then expelling slowly.

You can do all these exercises with absolute confidence, knowing that they just cannot harm you in any way, but—a word of warning—keep to these exercises, and do not



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try anything more advanced except under the guidance of a competent teacher, because ill advised breathing exercises can do quite a lot of harm. In our prison camp we had our prisoners breathe like this. We also went far more deeply into the matter, and taught them to breathe so that they would not feel pain, and that, allied with hypnosis, enabled us to do deep abdominal operations and to amputate arms and legs. We had no anesthetics, and so we had to resort to this method of killing pain—hypnosis and breath control.

That is nature's method, the natural way.

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## **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

### **The Bomb**

THE DAYS CRAWLED by with soul-searing monotony, lengthening into weeks, spreading into months, into years. At last there came a diversion from the everyday sameness of treating those who were afflicted. One day the guards came hurrying around with sheaves of paper in their hands, beckoning to a prisoner here, to a prisoner there. I was on that list. We were assembled on the square facing our huts.

We were kept for some hours just standing idly, and then, as the day had almost ended, the commandant came before us and said, "You troublemakers, you who have insulted our Emperor, you are going elsewhere for further treatment. You will leave in ten minutes." He turned abruptly and marched away. We stood more or less stunned. Ready in ten minutes? Well, at least we had no possessions. All we had to do was to say a few hurried farewells and then return to the compound.

So we were going to be taken to another camp? We speculated on the sort of camp, on where it would be. But, as is inevitable in such cases, no one had any really constructive thought. At the end of ten minutes whistles were blown, guards came hurrying around again, and we were marched off, some three hundred of us. We marched out through the gates; we left full of wonder, full of speculation, what sort of camp would this be? We were acknowledged troublemakers. We had never given in to the Japanese blandishments. We knew them for what they were. We knew, though, that wherever we were going it was not to a pleasant camp.

We marched past soldiers going the other way. They appeared to be in a high state of humour. No wonder, we thought, because according to the reports reaching us the Japanese were winning everywhere. Soon, we were told they would be in control of the whole world. How mistaken they were! At that time though we could only believe what the Japanese told us, we had no other source of information. These soldiers were most aggressive as they passed by and they lost no opportunity of dealing a blow at us—striking out wildly, irrationally, just for the sheer joy of hearing a rifle butt thud on shrinking flesh. We marched on, driven on by the curses of the guards. They too freely used their rifle butts. All too frequently the sick fell by the wayside where they were belabored by the

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guards. If they could not regain their feet and stumble blindly perhaps supported by others, then the guards stepped up and a bayonet thrust would end the struggle.

Sometimes though the guard would decapitate the victim and stick the severed head on the end of his bayonet. He would then run up and down the lines of toiling prisoners, grinning fiendishly at our looks of horror. Eventually, after many days of tiring, grueling marching, with far too little food, we arrived at a small port and were driven into a rude camp which had been constructed by the harbor. Here there were a number of men, men of all nations, troublemakers like us. They were so apathetic with weariness and with ill-treatment that they hardly looked up as we entered. Our number was now sadly reduced. Of three hundred or so who had started out only about seventy-five arrived. That night we stayed sprawled on the ground in the encampment behind barbed wire.

There was no shelter for us, no privacy, but we were used to that by now. Men and women lay on the ground, or did what they had to do under the eyes of the Japanese guards that long night.

In the morning we had a roll-call, and then we were kept standing in a ragged line for two or three hours. Eventually, the guards condescended to come and march us out, march us further down to the harbor, to a quay where there was a rusty old tramp ship, a really derelict affair. I was not by any means an expert on shipping. In fact almost every one of the prisoners knew more about nautical affairs than I, yet even to me this ship looked as if at any moment it would sink at its moorings. We were marched aboard along a creaking, rotted gang plank which also threatened to collapse at any moment and throw us into the scummy sea, which was littered with debris, floating boxes, empty tins, bottles, dead bodies.

As we boarded the ship we were forced down a hold in the forward part. Some three hundred of us were there. There was not enough room for us to sit down, certainly not enough room to move around. The last of the party was forced down with blows of rifle butts, and with the curses of the Japanese guards. Then came a clang as if the Gates of Doom were closing upon us. The cover of the hatch was slammed down, sending clouds of stinking dust upon us. We heard the sound of mallets driving home wooden wedges, and all light was excluded. After what seemed to be a terribly long time the ship started to vibrate.

There was the creaking rumble of the derelict old engine. It really felt as if the whole framework would shake itself to pieces and drop us out through the bottom of the ship. From the deck we could hear muffled shouts and screamed instructions in Japanese. The chugging continued. Soon there was a terrific rolling and pitching which told us that we had gone beyond the harbor and had reached the open sea. The journey was very rough indeed. The sea must have been tumultuous. We were continually thrown against each other, toppled over to be trampled on by others. We were shut down in the hold of that cargo boat and allowed on deck once only, during the hours of darkness. For the first two days no food at all was given to us. We knew why. It was to make sure that our spirit was broken. But it had little effect upon us. After two days we had about a cupful of rice each for each day.

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Many of the weaker prisoners soon died in the suffocating stench, shut down in that stinking hold. There was not enough oxygen to keep us alive. Many died, and collapsed like broken discarded dolls upon the steel floor beneath us. We, the hardly more fortunate survivors, had no choice but to stand on the dead and decomposing bodies. The guards would not allow us to move them out. We were all prisoners, and it did not matter to the guards whether we were dead or alive, we had to be the correct number as shown on their papers. So the rotting dead had to be kept in the hold with the suffering living until we arrived at our port of destination, when bodies dead and alive would be counted.

We lost all track of days, but eventually after an unspecified time there was a change in the note of the engine. The pitching and tossing lessened. The vibration altered and we surmised correctly that we were approaching a harbor. After much noise and fuss there came the clatter of chains, and the anchors were dropped. After what seemed to be an interminable time the hatches were flung off and Japanese guards started to descend with a Japanese port medical officer with them. Half way down they stopped in disgust. The Medical Officer vomited with the stench, vomited over us beneath. Then throwing dignity to the winds, they beat a hasty retreat up to the deck.

The next thing we knew was that hoses were being brought and streams of water rained down upon us. We were half drowned. The water was rising to our waists, our chests, to our chins, floating particles of the dead, the rotted dead, to our mouths. Then there were shouts and exclamations in Japanese and the water flow stopped. One of the deck officers came and peered over, and there was much gesticulation and discussion. He said that the boat would sink if any more water was pumped in. So a larger hose was dropped in and all the water was pumped out again.

All that day and all that night we were kept down there, shivering in our wet rags, sick with the stench of the decayed dead. The next day we were allowed up, two or three at a time. Eventually my turn came, and I went up on deck. I was roughly questioned. Where was my identity disc? My name was checked against a list, and I was roughly shoved over the side into a barge which was already crowded, and overcrowded, with a shivering collection of humanity, living scarecrows clad in the last vestiges of clothing. Some, indeed, were not clad at all. At last with the gunwales awash and with the barge threatening to sink if another person was put aboard, the Japanese guards decided that no more could safely be crammed in. A motor boat chugged up to the bows and a rope was made fast. The motor boat started for the shore dragging us in the decrepit old barge behind.

That was my first sight of Japan. We had reached the Japanese mainland and once ashore we were put into an open camp, a camp upon waste ground surrounded by barbed wire. For a few days we were kept there while the guards interrogated each man and woman, and then eventually a number of us were segregated and marched off a few miles into the interior where there was a prison which had been kept vacant to await our arrival.

One of the prisoners, a white man, gave way under the torture and said that I had been helping prisoners escape, that I had military information given me by dying pris-

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oners.

So once again I was called in for interrogations. The Japanese were most enthusiastic about trying to make me talk. They saw from my record that all previous attempts had failed, so this time they really excelled themselves. My nails, which had regrown, were split off backwards and salt was rubbed into the raw places. As that still did not make me speak I was suspended by my two thumbs from a beam and left for a whole day. That made me very sick indeed, but the Japanese were still not satisfied. The rope suspending me was cast loose, and I dropped with a bone shaking thud to the hard floor of the compound. A rifle butt was jammed in my chest. Guards knelt upon my stomach, my arms were pulled out and I was pegged down to ringbolts—apparently they had specialized in this method of treatment before! A hose was forced down my throat and water turned on. I felt that I was either going to suffocate through lack of air, or drown through too much water, or burst with the pressure. It seemed that every pore of my body was oozing water; it seemed that I was being blown up like a balloon. The pain was intense. I saw bright lights. There seemed to be an immense pressure on my brain, and eventually I fainted. I was given restoratives which brought me around to consciousness again. By now I was far too weak and ill to get to my feet, so three Japanese guards supported me—I was quite a bulky man—and dragged me again to that beam from whence I had previously been suspended.

A Japanese officer came and said, "You look quite wet. I think it is time you were dried off. It might help you to talk more. String him up." Two Japanese guards bent suddenly and snatched my ankles from the ground, snatched so abruptly that I fell violently and banged my head on the concrete. A rope was passed around my ankles and thrown over the beam again, and while they puffed like men having a hard task, I was hoisted feet uppermost, a yard or so from the ground. Then slowly, as if they were enjoying every moment of it, the Japanese guards spread paper and a few sticks on the ground beneath me. Grinning maliciously, one struck a match and lit the paper. Gradually waves of heat came upon me. The wood ignited, and I felt the skin of my head shriveling, wrinkling, in the heat. I heard a voice say, "He is dying. Do not let him die or I will hold you responsible. He must be made to talk." Then again a stunning thud as the rope was cast off, and I dropped head first into the burning embers. Once again I fainted.

When I regained consciousness I found that I was in a semi-basement cell lying on my back in the dank pool of water on the floor. Rats were scurrying about. At my first movement they jumped away from me, squeaking in alarm. Hours later guards came in and hoisted me to my feet, for I still could not stand. They carried me with many a prod and a curse to the iron barred window which was just level with the ground outside. Here my wrists were handcuffed to the iron bars so that my face was pressed against those bars.

An officer gave me a kick and said, "You will watch all that happens now. If you turn away or close your eyes you will have a bayonet stuck into you."

I watched, but there was nothing to see except this level stretch of ground—ground just about level with my nose. Soon there was a commotion at the end and a number of



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prisoners came into view, being propelled by guards who were treating them with excessive brutality. The group came nearer and nearer, then the prisoners were forced to kneel just in front of my window. Their arms were already bound behind them. Now they were bent back like a bow, and then their wrists were tied to their ankles. Involuntarily I closed my eyes, but I was soon forced to open them as a white hot pain shot through my body. A Japanese guard had inserted a bayonet, and I could feel the blood trickling down my legs. I looked outside. It was a mass execution. Some of the prisoners were bayoneted, others were beheaded. One poor wretch had apparently done something dreadful according to Japanese guards' standards, for he was disemboweled and left to bleed to death. This went on for several days. Prisoners were brought in front of me and executed by shooting, by bayoneting, or by beheading. The blood used to flow into my cell, and huge rats used to swarm in after it.

Night after night I was questioned by the Japanese, questioned for the information which they hoped to get out of me. But now I was in a red haze of pain, continual pain, day and night, and I hoped that they would just execute me and get it over. Then after ten days, which seemed like a hundred, I was told I was going to be shot unless I gave all the information which the Japanese wanted. The officers told me that they were sick of me, that my attitude was an insult to the Emperor. Still I declined to say anything.

So I was taken back to my cell, and flung in through the door to crash, half stunned against my concrete bed. The guard turned at the door and said, "No more food for you. You won't need any after tomorrow." As the first faint rays of light shot across the sky the next morning the door of the cell opened with a crash, and a Japanese officer and a squad of riflemen came in. I was marched out to the execution ground where I had seen so many killed. The officer pointed to the blood-saturated ground and said, "Yours will be here, too, soon. But you will have your own grave, you shall dig it."

They brought a shovel, and I, prodded on by bayonets, had to dig my own shallow grave. Then I was tied to a post so that when I was shot the rope could be just cut and I would fall head first into the grave which I, myself, had dug. The officer struck a theatrical pose, as he read out the sentence which said that I was to be shot for not cooperating with the Sons of Heaven. He said, "This is your last chance. Give the information that we want or you will be sent to join your dishonored ancestors." I made no reply—there did not seem to be anything suitable to say—so he repeated his statement. I still kept silent. At his command the squad of men raised their rifles. The officer came to me once again, and said that it really was my last chance. He emphasized it by smacking my face left and right with every word. I still made no reply, so he marked the position of my heart for the riflemen, and then for good measure he smacked my face with the flat of his sword and spat at me before turning away in disgust to rejoin his men.

Half way between me and them—but being very careful not to stand in the line of fire—he looked toward them, and gave the order to take aim. The men lifted their rifles. The barrels converged upon me. It seemed to me that the world was full of huge black holes; the black holes were the muzzles of the rifles. They seemed to grow larger and larger, ominous, and I knew that at any moment they would spit death. Slowly the officer raised his sword and brought it down violently with the command, "FIRE!"

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The world seemed to dissolve in flame and pain, and clouds of choking smoke. I felt as if I had been kicked by giant horses with red-hot hooves. Everything spun around. The world seemed to be crazy. The last thing I saw was a red haze, blood pouring down, then blackness, a roaring blackness. Then as I sagged at my bonds—nothingness.

Later I recovered consciousness with some astonishment that the Heavenly Fields or the Other Place seemed so familiar. But then everything was spoiled for me. I was resting face down in the grave. Suddenly I was plodded with a bayonet. Out of the corner of my eye I saw the Japanese officer. He said that the bullets of the execution squad had been specially prepared. "We experimented on more than two hundred prisoners," he said. They had withdrawn some of the charge, and had also removed the lead bullet and replaced it with something else, so that I should be hurt but not killed—they still wanted that information. "And we shall get it," the officer said, "we shall have to devise other methods. We will get it in the end, and the longer you hold out, the more pain you will endure."

My life had been a hard life indeed, full of rigorous training, full of self discipline, and the special training which I had had at the lamasery was the only thing which enabled me to keep going, to keep sane. It is doubtful in the extreme if anyone without that training would have been able to survive.

The bad wounds which I received at the "execution" caused double pneumonia. For the time being I was desperately ill, hovering on the brink of death, denied any medical attention at all, denied any comfort. I lay in my cell on the concrete floor without blankets, without anything, and shivered and tossed, and hoped to die.

Slowly I recovered somewhat, and for some time I had been conscious of the drone of aircraft engines, unfamiliar engines they appeared to be, too. Not the Japanese ones which I had come to know so well, and I wondered what was really happening. The prison was at a village near Hiroshima, and I imagined that the Japanese victors—the Japanese were winning everywhere—were flying back the captured aircraft.

One day when I was still very ill indeed there was a sound of aircraft engines again. Suddenly the ground shook and there was a thudding, throbbing roar. Clouds of dust fell out of the sky, and there was a stale, musty odour. The air seemed to be electric, tense. For a moment nothing seemed to move. Then the guards ran in terror, screaming in fright, calling upon the Emperor to protect them from they knew not what. It was the atom bombing of Hiroshima of 6th August 1945. For some time I lay wondering what to do. Then it seemed obvious that the Japanese were far too busy to think about me, so I got shakily to my feet and tried the door. It was unlocked. I was so seriously ill that it was considered impossible for me to escape. Besides, normally there were guards about, but those guards had disappeared. There was panic everywhere. The Japanese thought that their Sun God had deserted them, and they were milling around like a colony of disturbed ants, milling around in the last extremity of panic. Rifles had been discharged, bits of uniform, food—everything. In the direction of their air raid shelters there were confused shouts and screams as they all tried to get in at the same time.

I was weak. I was almost too weak to stand. I bent to pick up a Japanese tunic and cap,

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and I almost fell over as giddiness overtook me. I dropped to my hands and knees, and struggled into the tunic and put the cap on. Just near there was a pair of heavy sandals. I put on these, too, because I was bare footed. Then slowly I crawled into the bushes and continued to crawl, painfully. There were many thuds and thumps, and all the anti-aircraft guns were firing.

The sky was red with vast banners of black and yellow smoke. It seemed that the whole world was breaking up and wondered at the time why I was making such an effort to get away when obviously this was the end of everything. Throughout the night I made my slow, torturous way to the seashore, which, as I well knew, was a very few miles from the prison. I was indeed sick. The breath rasped in my throat, and my body shook and quivered. It took every bit of self control that I could muster to force myself along.

At last in the dawn light I reached the shore, reached the shore, reached the creek. Warily, half dead with fatigue and illness, I peered out of the bushes and saw before me a small fishing boat rocking at its moorings. It was deserted. Apparently the owner had panicked and rushed off inshore.

Stealthily I made my way down to it and managed painfully to pull myself upright to look over the gunwale. The boat was empty. I managed to put one foot on the rope mooring the boat, and with immense effort I levered myself up. Then my strength gave out and I toppled head first to the bottom of the boat among the bilge water and a few pieces of stale fish which apparently had been kept for bait. It took me a long time to gather enough strength to cut the mooring rope with a knife which I found. Then I slumped back into the bottom again as the vessel drifted out of the creek on the ebb tide. I made my way to the stern and crouched there utterly exhausted. Hours later I managed to hoist the ragged sail as the wind appeared favourable. The effort was too much for me and I sank back into the bottom of the boat in a dead faint.

Behind me on the mainland of Japan the decisive step had been taken. The atom bomb had been dropped and had knocked the fight out of the Japanese. The war had ended, and I knew it not. The war had ended for me, too, or so I thought, for here I was adrift upon the Sea of Japan with no food except the bits of rotten fish in the bottom, and with no water. I stood and clung to the mast for support, bracing my arms around it, putting my chin against it, holding myself up as best I could. As I turned my head toward the stern I could see the coast of Japan receding. A faint haze enveloped it. I turned toward the bows. Ahead there was nothing.

I thought of all that I had gone through. I thought of the Prophecy. As if from afar I seemed to hear the voice of my Guide, the Lama Mingyar Dondup, "You have done well, my Lobsang. You have done well. Be not disheartened, for this is not the end." Over the bows a ray of sunshine lit up the day for a moment, and the wind freshened, and the little ripples of bow waves sprang away from the boat and made a pleasant hissing. And I? I was headed—where? All I knew was that for the moment I was free, free from torture, free from imprisonment, free from the living hell of camp life. Perhaps I was even free to die.

But no, although I longed for the peace of death, for the belief that it would give me

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from my suffering, I knew that I could not die yet, for my Fate said that I would have to die in the land of the red man, America. And here I was afloat, alone, starving, in an open boat on the Sea of Japan. Waves of pain engulfed me. I felt once again I was being tortured. The breath rasped in my throat, and my eyes grew dim. I thought that possibly at that moment the Japanese had discovered my escape and were sending a fast boat in pursuit. The thought was too much for me. My grip of the mast slipped. I sagged, sank, and toppled, and once again I knew blackness, the blackness of oblivion. The boat sailed on into the unknown.

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